DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 356 CE 077 152

AUTHOR	Mauch, Werner, Ed.; Papen, Uta, Ed.
TITLE	Making a Difference: Innovations in Adult Education.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Hamburg (Germany). Inst. for Education.
ISBN	ISBN-0-8204-3296-2
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	217p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 275 Seventh Avenue, 28th Fl., New York, NY 10001-6708 ($19.95, plus $3 handling and shipping).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Adult Educators; Adult Learning; Adult Programs; Developing Nations; Distance Education; Educational Change; *Educational Innovation; Educational Needs; Educational Research; *Empowerment; Environmental Education; Foreign Countries; Needs Assessment; Rural Development; Teacher Education; *Womens Education; Youth Programs

ABSTRACT

This book highlights examples of innovative educational practices in the field of organized adult learning. Fifteen chapters present outcomes of collective research in the Innovations in Nonformal and Adult Education (INNAE) project. "Common Learning--Collective Research: Innovating Adult Education" (Werner Mauch, Uta Papen) describes the methodology and identifies five transversal or common issues that appeared in the case studies. Part II contains the case studies prepared by INNAE participants: "Innovating for Change: Women's Education for Empowerment: Analysis of the Mahila Samakhya Program in Banda District"; "Graduate Resource Advancement (GREAT): Non-Formal Exposure of Youth to Rural Development" (S.B. Ekanayake); "Question de Competences--The Competence Issue: Tool for Women" (Rachel Belisle); "And the Hammock Lingers On: Whither Theater-for-Development" (Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh); "The Community Health Workers' School of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees" (Jihad Mash'al); "Kenyan Experience on Training Adult Education Teachers through Distance Education" (Khalfan A. Mazrui); "CAFAM's [Caja de Compensacion Familiar--Family Subsidy Fund] Continuing Adult Education Program (CAFAED): A Human Development Project" (Maria Auxiliadora Consuegra G.); "'We Got Together...And?': A Project for Couples" (Manuel Bastias Urra, B. Rosa Saavedra Diaz); and "The Fisherfolk Environmental Education Project: Timely Innovation in Popular Environmental Education Philippines" (M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling). Each chapter in Part III addresses one transversal issue: "Change and Integration" (S.B. Ekanayake, Werner Mauch, Catherine Alum Odora-Hoppers); "Participation and Partnership, Sustainability and Transferability" (Rachel Belisle, Dipta Bhos, Ingrid Jung); "Needs Issue" (Maria Consuegra, Khalfan Mazrui, Josef Muller); "Conversation on Empowerment" (Rosa Saavedra, Miryam Zuniga, Maria Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling, Uta Papen); and "In the Guise of a Conclusion: New Ways of Learning" (Dipta Bhog, Uta Papen). (YLB)

****

ED 424 356

Werner Mauch
Uta Papen
(Eds.)

Making a Difference: Innovations in Adult Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
CAMcIntosh
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

UNESCO Institute for Education
German Foundation for International Development

CE077152

PETER LANG
Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften

2

Werner Mauch
Uta Papen
(Eds.)

Making a Difference: Innovations in Adult Education

PETER LANG
Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften

Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Making a difference : innovations in adult education / Werner Mauch / Uta Papen (eds.). - Frankfurt am Main ; Berlin ; Bern ; New York ; Paris ; Wien : Lang, 1997
ISBN 3-631-32038-8

ISBN 3-631-32038-8
US-ISBN 0-8204-3296-2
92-820-1073-2 (UNESCO/UIE)

© Peter Lang GmbH
Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften
Frankfurt am Main 1997
All rights reserved.

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright. Any utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution. This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

Printed in Germany 1 2 3 4 6 7
5

Acknowledgements

The case studies constituting the core of this book represent the contributions of educational practitioners, planners and researchers who shared their experiences with each other and with us. We wish to express our very special thanks to these authors for investing so much time and energy in preparing their case studies. Not only did they provide extensive descriptions of their projects based on a thorough analysis of their own work, but they also engaged in interviews and discussions with colleagues, trainers and learners and thus provided many challenging insights for our joint discussions during the research project.

In addition, we have to thank all other participants, especially the consultants from the various institutions involved, for their enthusiasm and work during the INNAE seminars and for their contributions to this book.

We also wish to express our gratitude to Peter Alheit, Jules Nteba Bakumba, Harbans Bhola, Felix Cadena Barquin, Claudine Helleman, Ulrika Peppler Barry and Abu Tayeb for their active support.

Finally, we would like to thank Peter Sutton for his invaluable assistance in the process of editing this publication.

The UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, is a legally independent entity. While the programmes of the Institute are established along the lines laid down by the General Conference of UNESCO, the publications of the Institute are issued under its sole responsibility. UNESCO is not responsible for its contents.

The points of view, selection of facts, and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with official positions of the UNESCO Institute for Education.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations or the UNESCO Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of the frontiers of any country or territory.

The UNESCO-Institute for Education (UIE) is a non-profit international research, training, information, documentation and publishing centre of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). One of three educational institutes of UNESCO, UIE focuses mainly on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education in the perspective of lifelong learning.

UNESCO-Institute for Education
Feldbrunnenstr. 58
20148 Hamburg
Germany
Tel.: +49-40-448041-0, Fax: +49-40-4107723, e-mail: uie@unesco.org

*

The German Foundation for International Development (DSE) offers training to specialists and executive personnel from developing nations and countries in transition. The work of its Education, Science and Documentation Centre is integrated in the priority work areas of German development cooperation: reduction of poverty and containment of population growth through adequate and qualified training provision, protection of the environment and natural resources through broad-based in-school and out-of-school education, furthering self-help potential through qualified training provision.

The DSE's basic education programmes support the qualitative improvement of basic education systems. It focusses its programmes on the following areas:

- Advanced training for management of basic education systems and the development of systematic and productive change in basic education programmes.
- Use of local languages in basic education, because children, young people and adults find it easier to learn in a familiar language than in a foreign European language. Support is given to linguists and educators who produce school books in national languages for instruction in the mother tongue.
- Improvement of basic education curricula so that the syllabuses, the school books and the teaching itself correspond to the concrete requirements of the pupils and their society; the DSE advises specialists in the partner institutions on the development of syllabuses and teaching material.
- Support of the development of effective instruments to assess learning achievements.

The address of the Education, Science and Documentation Centre of the DSE is as follows:

Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung (DSE)
Hans-Boeckler-Str. 5
D-53225 Bonn
Tel.: +49-288-4001-0; Fax: +49-228-4001-111; e-mail: zed@dse.de

Table of Contents

Preface 9

I) Introduction

Common Learning - Collective Research: Innovating Adult Education
Werner Mauch, Uta Papen 11

II) Innovative Experiences

Innovating for Change: Women's Education for Empowerment. An Analysis of the Mahila Samakhya Programme in Banda District (India)
Nirantar - A Centre for Women and Education 33

Graduate Resource Advancement (GREAT): Non-Formal Exposure of Youth to Rural Development (Sri Lanka)
S.B. Ekanayake 48

Question de Compétence. The Competence issue: A Tool for Women (Québec/Canada)
Rachel Bélisle 62

And the Hammock Lingers on: Whither Theatre for Development? (Cameroon)
Hansel N. Eyoh 82

The Community Health Workers' School of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (Palestine)
Jihad Mash'al 98

Kenyan Experience in Training Adult Education Teachers through Distance Education (Kenya)
Khalfan Mazrui 109

CAFAM's Continuing Adult Education Program (CAFAED): A Human Development Project (Colombia)
Maria A. Consuegra 121

"We got Together...and?" A Project for Couples (Chile)
Manuel Bastías, Rosa Saavedra Díaz 136

The Fisherfolk Environmental Education Project: A Timely Innovation on Popular, Environmental Education (Philippines)
M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling 157

III) Transversal Issues

Change and Integration
S.B. Ekanayake, Werner Mauch, Catherine Alum Odora-Hoppers 173

Participation and Partnership, Sustainability and Transferability
Rachel Bélisle, Dipta Bhog, Ingrid Jung 181

The Needs Issue
Maria A. Consuegra, Khalfan Mazrui, Josef Müller 191

Conversation on Empowerment
Uta Papen, Rosa Saavedra, M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling, Miryan Zuñiga 197

In the Guise of a Conclusion: New Ways of Learning
Dipta Bhog, Uta Papen 210

List of Contributors 216

Preface

The present book is about adult educators and/or facilitators who have come to change their educational practice, approaches and programmes in order to respond better to the needs and aspirations of the participants.

The authors who have contributed to this book explain how, as practitioners, they have tried to deal with resistance to cultural change and with ambivalent attitudes to modernization. They also describe how in their educational work they have attempted to respond to women's demand for participation. Their experiences document how women and men can be supported in their attempts to take their own decisions regarding the kind of processes they want to be involved in. Such innovations concern not only the methodology or contents of the programmes but also their institutional and organizational design.

To innovate is to re-examine our ways of seeing and doing things, to look over the fences (the geographical and mental fences), to be actively curious and reflexively active, to reinvent constantly our vision and approaches. To innovate is to be alert, it is simply to live consciously, to create and to enjoy creating, and, by doing so, to share innovative experiences with others.

But to innovate also means to disturb and perturb, it implies making changes. To innovate means to alter the music. The clearest sign of innovation is the manifestation of disturbance, friction and conflicts. And the best guarantee of successful innovation is the skill to deal with the disturbance, to manage the turmoil without losing sight of the transformative process at work.

The case studies and contributions published in this book were prepared in the framework of an international research project on "Innovations in Adult Education" (INNAE). The task of the institutions involved in this project, the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), was not merely to document innovative projects. Rather, the aim was to initiate a different kind of action-oriented research which gives practitioners from different regions the opportunity to reflect upon and to systematize their experiences in a dialogue with other educators/facilitators. This process, described in detail in the introduction of the publication, was innovative in itself, because participants coming from various parts of the world jointly developed the methodology that was to be applied. Thus, they became themselves researchers and the reflexive actors in their own educational practice. Together with members of DSE and UIE, they developed a common frame of reference for analysing the educational innovations. In a further step, they discussed the common issues and concerns which emerged from all the projects. However, they refused to suggest that the methods which worked in one context and the success stories of particular projects could be easily transferred to and reproduced in other environments.

This publication describes how innovative projects are being developed and implemented. But, more profoundly, it is a book about how groups of adults are involved in learning projects, how they interact in such activities and create a stimulating learning environment. Finally, this book is about ways to encourage women and men to become more reflexive and creative in their daily lives and in their communities.

Paul Bélanger
UIE

Ingrid Jung
DSE

COMMON LEARNING - COLLECTIVE RESEARCH: INNOVATING ADULT EDUCATION

Werner Mauch, Uta Papen

UNESCO-Institute for Education

1. Introduction: Raiders of the Lost Ark?

A quarter of a century after publication of the Faure Report, 21 years after the Nairobi Recommendation on Adult Education, 12 years after the Paris Declaration on the Right to Learn, and seven years after the adoption of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, the importance of out-of-school education cannot be denied. It is not only in international forums that education is considered "a problem...of greatest importance" and "a capital, universal subject" in order "to make the world as it is a better place, and to prepare for the future" (Faure et al. 1972: xix). Education is still regarded as "inseparable from democracy, the abolition of privilege and the promotion within society as a whole of the ideas of autonomy, responsibility and dialogue" (Recommendation on the development of adult education 1977: 3). It is understood as a central means "that can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance and international cooperation", as "an indispensable key to...personal and social improvement" (World Declaration on Education for All 1991: 88) and even as "a fundamental dimension of any social, cultural, and economic design" (idem: 94).

As for adult education, would anyone dispute that the "access of adults to education, in the context of lifelong education, is a fundamental aspect of the right to education and facilitates the exercise of the right to participate in political, cultural, artistic and scientific life" (Recommendation on the development of adult education 1977: 3)? To advance adults' right to learn is seen as "one of the best contributions we can make to solving the crucial problems of humanity today"(see *The Right to Learn* n.d.), and the claim that "education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world" (World Declaration on Education for All 1991: 88) is probably ever more generally accepted. Only recently, the report of the Delors Commission again stressed the fundamental importance of more learning opportunities for everybody in order to cope with the manifold threats and challenges faced by contemporary societies and individuals.

This creed of educationalists, with its rhetoric of human rights, democracy, equality and justice, is called into question and challenged not only by the daily struggles for survival of those who cannot enjoy a life built on these principles, but also by those critics who reject the idea that history will lead humanity to a state of common wealth, health and justice for all, be it through the triumph of human spirit and consciousness or through the final victory of revolution. The grand narrative of modernity has lost its innocence, not only in the domain of education, although education is especially challenged by this critique (Peters 1995).

One focus of such criticism is on the relationship between local circumstances and the validity of universal concepts. Educational innovation in a traditional framework of modernization is certainly in danger of falling into the trap of blind universalism by neglecting

the analysis of the micro-level worlds of learners and the macro-structures which affect them, and by adopting promising abstract models which are believed to be easily transferable from one context to another.[1] Disregarding learners' potentials and prior experiences, however, also contradicts all efforts to enlarge their capacity to act within their fields of possibilities (see also 4.1.3 below).

Being convinced that more adult learning and more organized adult learning are not only possible but indispensable, we should continue to analyse the potential of adult learning and assess the realities of people and societies against the model of the "learning society". Organized adult learning takes place in a variety of forms all over the world, and participation is enormous and growing fast. But what do we know about contemporary changes in the understanding of adult learning? From an international perspective, what is new in the world of adult education? How does it work and how can we take advantage of such new developments? Are there indicators for general trends and changes in practice and in theory? What is going on in the domain of adult education in different countries today? Are there common features and trends of development?

The foregoing remarks on the present and future importance of adult education are only one side of the issue. On the other side there are national and international policies which still equate education only with schooling, and adult education merely with literacy for adults. Even at the level of international cooperation, many donor agencies and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank followed this understanding until very recently. In a perspective of Lifelong Learning for All, suitable approaches to education in general and adult education in particular must go beyond this restricted view of the content of adult education and the age of learners (see Lengrand 1975; Dave 1976; Merriam and Caffarella 1991; Tuijnman and van der Kamp 1992; Bélanger and Gelpi 1994). The many and varied demands for education which are the expression of an interest in learning in a whole range of fields by people of all ages do indeed require "intersectoral" and "intergenerational" concepts of education in order to overcome the manifold tensions "between the global and the local, the universal and the individual, tradition and modernity" and to grasp "one of the keys to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century" (Delors 1996 et al.: blurb).

2. Framework: Think locally - act globally (and vice versa!)

> "I realized that it is hard for me, as a "macho" man, to act differently and it is easier to go along with things as they are... The environment is very powerful and machismo is widespread because all of us were brought up in a traditional way... I decided to sweep because I realized that men and women are equal, I want to change my way of life, but I am aware that people in the community criticize if they see a man involved in a woman's task."[2]

---

[1] International cooperation in literacy, for example, is seriously attacked for promoting a single language and a single literacy, and for neglecting local literacy practices and cultural identities (see Street 1994: 10). This critical view is clearly supported by the many examples of failed national and international literacy campaigns.

[2] See "We got together...and?" A project for Couples (Chile), pp.137*f*

"In confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice" (Delors 1996).

The first statement describes the experiences of an unknown adult learner from Chile. The second emphasises the expectations assigned to organized learning for the future of humanity as a whole. Whereas the Chilean may — certainly unaware of the global implications — already have accomplished an important change for himself, the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice for all human beings are perhaps further away from attainment than ever.

We know about the nearly one billion illiterate adults worldwide, about the hundreds of millions of unemployed people, the countless crowds of migrants and refugees, the workers suffering from appalling working conditions, and the masses of women excluded from equal participation in many domains who also belong to this humankind. We are aware of the damage done to the environment, of continuing crises in the fields of nutrition and population development, and of continuing and newly arising crises in the field of health. We know that school education is but one means of facing the challenges of the future.[3] The importance of a multidimensional approach to education has been emphasised on a number of occasions, and the role of out-of-school education and adult learning for global and sustainable development has been clearly stressed. From the point of view of global and sustainable development, it is indispensable to analyse critically new approaches and strategies in education that will promote such development.

The vision of a general and worldwide advancement towards "learning societies" which evolved in the 1970s[4] (related to the concept of Lifelong Education) also provoked critical arguments which have not lost their significance. The concept of the learning society has currently gained new prominence in the framework of lifelong learning policies, and so has criticism of it. This concept was, and still is, challenged by those who felt threatened by the idea that people's lives could become subject to never-ending control exerted by an extended school system which would "imprison" whole populations in "the global classroom" (Illich and Verne 1976). Such critics see lifelong learning as equivalent to permanent education or continuous instruction: an education which has the objective of forcing people to conform to a uniform worldwide "system", rather than leading them to empowerment and liberation. It has invaded both the industrialized world and the developing countries, and leads to a world under the control of totalitarian states and super-institutions pursuing uniform concepts. Lifelong education, serving the ends of the capitalist economy through the industrialization of humankind by bureaucracies, governments and institutions with supreme power would thus

---

[3] According to a current (American) definition of adult education, the relationship between organized adult learning, the educators involved and the life of participants can be defined as follows: "Adult education is an intervention into the ordinary business of life - an intervention whose immediate goal is change, in knowledge or in competence. An adult educator is one who is skilled in making such interventions" (Courtney 1989). If we acknowledge that the "ordinary business of life" is the area where adult education has its primary function, it seems clear that learning should take place throughout the lifespan.

[4] and was adopted in the 1990s in the context of "Education for All": see Haggis, op cit., p.86.

lead to a real "brave new world". In the present context of North-South relations and development policies, this criticism is being extended to national education policies and the work of international agencies, which too easily adopt expert concepts and promote top-down approaches, neglecting cultural realities and people's creativity.

Today we are also more sensitive regarding the interrelated trends of globalization and individualization. More and more strategies are required to cope with a growing variety of risks in an increasingly complex world, leading to less and less security for the individual and the group of which s/he is part in the global "risk society" (see Beck 1994). It is in such a context that adult learning takes place. Everyone needs to be able to reflect and to act in order to deal with the crises that affect his or her life. Rethinking learning strategies in a global perspective and in the context of local and personal realities consequently requires both local action and reflection, and globally inspired activity. If space for reflection is to be given to creative actors practising in the field of adult learning so that they can pursue their own projects, use will have to be made of individual and community experiences which, in turn, acknowledge the diversity of ways in which people and communities function. At the same time, this "reflective space" cannot be separated from global perspectives, since many transversal problems and questions are part of people's reality.

Non-formal and adult education are examined nowadays with respect to their role and functions within relationships of power on the micro as well as on the macro level. As organized adult learning tends to be under less direct government influence than school education, the prospects for an "autonomous" development of this sector of education are regarded as more positive. Control of contents, means and media of adult education may stay more in the hands of the learners, allowing the development of a variety of approaches. Organized adult learning should be assessed according to its potential contribution to autonomous development, to individual and collective self-fulfilment, and to cultural diversity. For this purpose, the question of empowerment stays in centre-stage: "The creation of critical minds requires a physical and reflective space where new ideas may be entertained and argued, and where transformative demands may occur outside the surveillance of those who may seek to control these changes" (Stromquist 1995: 18).

This understanding of empowerment is also important for the design of research into innovation and for the eventual incorporation of research findings into the practical work of educational projects. Given such an understanding of empowerment, research cannot set out merely to present and disseminate success stories or recipes. It will help to understand educational innovation as a process rooted in the local context in which creative struggles are embedded if the actors themselves are provided with space for critical reflection on their practice, and if practical concepts are developed out of their creativity and involvement in specific struggles in critical contexts.

This is the background against which the project of which this publication is an outcome was created: Innovations in Non-Formal and Adult Education (INNAE).

3. Aims, perspectives and proceedings: The shift from comparative education to dialogue

In the course of INNAE, several participants from the projects chosen said that they were not aware of running something called "innovative projects". "We did not intend to be *innovative*.

We wanted to *do* something!" This utterance could well be extended: "We wanted to do something *different*!" Being "different" was, quite simply, one of the criteria for the selection of projects. They created something different from what already existed, for example by "addressing problems not solved by traditional means".

When the INNAE initiative was being planned, the task did not seem too complex and difficult: Let us a) select a sample of projects in different world regions that try to make a difference to traditional adult learning, b) identify a person from each project who is familiar with it and ready to report on the project, and c) let these persons reflect on their work and have them tell the stories of their projects by writing a case study. Organize d) exchange and dialogue about these reflections among the writers, e) analyse their approaches and strategies through this exchange, and f) extract the common features of innovative educational work.

The ultimate aim of the initiative was to strengthen the capacity of educators to understand and promote innovations in adult education.

The objectives were:

- to initiate a participatory learning process in order to analyse and document processes of change and transfer of knowledge in innovations in non-formal and adult education
- to develop the necessary tools and techniques for that purpose
- to explore conditions necessary to sustain innovative learning processes
- to draw lessons for the design, implementation and evaluation of innovations
- to support and reinforce the development of the innovative projects that took part in the initiative
- to initiate further innovations in adult education, and
- to explore new ways of intercultural learning, dialogue and networking.

The case studies and the conclusions were to be documented and published, thereby enriching knowledge about new developments in adult education. On the one hand, when offered to interested actors in the field of adult education, this knowledge would help to improve the practice of organized adult learning in general. On the other hand, the practitioners involved would also profit from the exchange with colleagues by obtaining a broader understanding of their own practice. To that end the conceptual framework of this endeavour represented a process of individual and collective reflection and learning.

The organizing institutions, the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE)[5] shared the conviction that in the different cultures of adult education which are nowadays flourishing all over the world there are many interesting and meaningful approaches which are not yet well documented but could be instructive for a wider international public. Various forms of adult education are rapidly developing, e.g., basic education, continuing professional education, health education, population education and community development programmes. There is an evident need for

---

[5] The INNAE project was jointly financed by DSE and UIE. UIE's activities are supported by the German Authorities, by contributions from UNESCO and from other collaborating agencies. The programme of DSE is financed through the support of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation. DSE made possible the international activities carried out as part of INNAE, financing the seminars and the international publication. UIE funded the local activities, supporting the work of the case study authors and consultants.

reliable information on how the overall adult education scene is evolving and on how innovative approaches are developed. What is known and recognized as innovative practice is largely defined by discussion of mainstream policy and its understanding of adult learning. There is a need to promote an alternative concept of educational innovation which reflects a concern for the learners, for autonomous learning, diversity of content and quality of educational provision. Knowledge on innovations is required because it can help to develop and improve existing adult education opportunities.

A simple, but nevertheless ambitious, plan resulted from this idea: to try to learn directly from such projects in terms of their importance for the adult education environment as well as their meaning for learners. A set of questions arose from this plan. What makes these innovative experiences different from traditional settings of organized learning? Are there common features that define the innovative character of these projects? Is it possible systematically to organize processes of educational innovation? What is the relationship between the innovative projects and their environment, that is, the specific political, economic and cultural context of adult education in those projects? How do innovative projects influence this environment, and what are the specific conditions that promote innovative projects? What is the relationship between innovative educational *concepts* and innovative *practices*? What can we say about the success (or failure) of innovative practices and the emergence (and career) of innovative concepts? Is it possible to support innovative practices, and by what criteria should we analyse and evaluate such innovations?

The designers of the project also planned to focus on the experiences of the actors, by asking further questions. Can we analyse these projects according to the relevance of the learning experience for the learners involved? What characterizes such learning experiences? Who are the main actors in the course of a project and what is the role played by the initiators?

Altogether, the above-mentioned questions comprise the research interest of the INNAE initiative. The research programme which was organized accordingly included a core sequence of three seminars, which took place between 1993 and 1995. The participants invited were organizers of innovative projects and educational experts with a special interest in adult education and development. Between the seminars, contact between the participants, from all regions of the world, was maintained by means of modern and/or traditional communication, that is, by mail, fax, phone and, partially, by E-mail. A special medium of communication was the "INNAE News", a newsletter of which four issues appeared between the seminars and provided two-way communication between all participants.

4. Methodology

In a nutshell, INNAE intended to foster a collective process of reflection and practical learning among the participants (see 4.3 below). The conceptual framework was fundamentally open, allowing constant revision and adjustment to new requirements. This open framework was certainly suited to the object of the research: innovative educational developments. As innovations cannot simply be transferred from one context to another but must be re-invented in context, the research group could apply this idea of re-invention directly in its own research by sharing tasks, work and responsibilities. The didactic principle of this research context was, consequently, facilitating learning, not instruction.

A central activity in this learning process was the preparation of case studies by the practitioners in the projects. During and after the writing of case studies, a set of *transversal issues* was selected and discussed among participants, and finally a set of texts on these issues was prepared by them, benefiting from the previous exchange process.

4.1. Underlying concepts

4.1.1. Adult education

Adult education is understood in a broad sense: it takes place when and where adults learn through an *organized* process,[6] in a large variety of learning areas and across traditionally segregated sectors. This is the case in literacy courses as well as in teacher training, retraining for unemployed people, technical instruction for mechanics or out-of-school mathematics. It is also true of many teaching/learning relationships in fields such as environmental protection, health promotion, sexuality, agricultural extension, community development or the development of critical political attitudes. Generally speaking, adult education can be described as any organized teaching/learning *relationship* between adults resulting in a teaching/learning *process*. In terms of institutional setting, this understanding comprises all organized out-of-school learning.

Given the richness and heterogeneity of this field and the focus of the approach, it is clear that such a worldwide international study cannot aim at a comprehensive representation of current developments in adult learning. Instead, such a study can help to provide some insight into the similarities and differences in selected practices and can contribute to the debate on educational innovations from an international as well as a local perspective.

In the international context, such a study should avoid certain typical pitfalls. This can be achieved by observing some crucial principles of adult education:

- *Collaborative research and knowledge hierarchies*: One central issue for an international study such as this is the relationship between industrialized and developing countries. In terms of teaching/learning relationships, this means avoiding knowledge hierarchy and vertical exchange. In the same way that horizontal exchange is promoted in adult education, the exchange foreseen in INNAE was to be undertaken in a non-hierarchical manner. Participants were regarded as the best experts on their own practice. INNAE adopted a concept of innovation which focused on the inherent transformative capacity of all educational projects and the shared creativeness of all those engaged in educational activities, who constantly review their methodology and invent and experiment with new strategies. The analysis of innovative approaches in our project was based on the assumption that understanding specific local experiences can provide meaningful insights into the global questions which are presently debated at the regional and international level. Building links between these key questions of current adult education policy, and the few experiences presented in INNAE, was at the heart of our research. Accordingly, the project relied on the involvement of practitioners and researchers, both from the North and the South. In line with the

---

[6] We by no means deny the relevance of informal learning, which is perhaps the core element of all learning and of course takes place in organized learning processes as well. An extended discussion of this question would go far beyond the frame of our study.

concept of innovation adopted, the project did not seek to find recipes, nor did it invite innovation experts whose task it would have been to extract from the selected cases the meaningful lessons and to teach the attending practitioners how to improve their work. Not only was a distinction between "expert" researchers and "lay" practitioners to be avoided, but the export to the South of innovation theories developed in the intellectual centres of the North was likewise rejected. Instead, in place of simple transfer, the generation of specific new knowledge was the aim of the common process. Given the final selection of projects, however, there was a strong focus on experiences in developing countries.

- *Group learning — learning group*: The research approach adopted a concept of cooperative research. The members of the group were simultaneously learners and co-researchers. One of the key elements of INNAE has been "the interlearning process between the experiences". By learning about other experiences and taking part in a joint analysis of the projects, including their own, participants from adult education projects were invited to reflect on current innovative developments in different regions of the world, their shortcomings and successes. Initiating and sustaining such a process was central to the approach chosen for the project.

- *Dealing with differences*: The heterogeneity of the research group certainly posed a significant challenge, but was also a major advantage. The case studies represent very diverse educational fields and different local contexts. Respecting cultural diversity and avoiding the imposition of ready-made concepts, and at the same time creating a common focus of reflection through an open debate on relevant common themes, resulted in the work on the above-mentioned transversal issues. These issues were an appropriate medium for collective reflection which included all perspectives, which was seen as a core element of adult learning (Mezirow 1991). At the same time, they were a methodological tool for avoiding any unnecessary dichotomy between inductive and deductive approaches, by analogy to the reconciliation of local and global perspectives.

4.1.2. Educational innovation

The following hypotheses describe the understanding of innovation applied in the study:

- Relevant educational innovation can be analysed according to its capacity to promote *significant learning processes* among actors with respect to their *capacity to act* within their *action environment* under *changing conditions*.

Education is related to the (individual and/or collective) actors' *capacity to act*. The major purpose of educational activity is to assist learners in their efforts to deal purposefully and reasonably with problematic circumstances (conflicts), especially when meeting obstacles to their capacity to act. Consequently, the guiding question for the analysis of the projects was the following: "How did the project change the learners' capacity to act within their action environment?"

Adult education is significant if it brings something new to the world of the learners by introducing new elements or by recreating or restructuring existing elements. As

explained above, this "something new" is to be understood in terms of learners' ability to act, both as individuals and as a group within their social environment. The emphasis is on the learner as a social being, able to act upon the society to which she or he belongs. The learners in the projects are seen as "socializing individuals" who act upon the social, cultural, political or other circumstances of their lives.

- There is no universal form of innovation which can apply to all societies.

Different social and cultural environments will produce different solutions to particular problems. By environment we mean:

- the political and economic conditions in the community in question
- the current state of adult education provision in the respective country
- the dominant educational policies
- the concept of adult education held by the project organizers, their understanding of development, etc.
- the social actors who are members of the respective community, and their social relationships
- the cultural background.

Educational innovations can be assessed only in relation to their environment. Thus, it would not be helpful to create hierarchies of innovative practices labelled as "good" and "bad" solutions. It is generally acknowledged that innovations are dependent on the social actors involved and the resources available to them in a specific context, so it is important to look at the innovation from the perspective of this context. To understand the solution thus means to consider it as a specific response dependent on the resources (environment) available.

- It is possible to distinguish different forms of innovation by virtue of projects' and actors' cultural, social, political, economic and other environments.

Analysis of innovation has to deal with commonalities and differences. There are many relevant questions and problems which are shared by educational projects in different countries and regions, and there is no single successful mode of innovation in adult education, but different ways of initiating or developing new adult education practices depending on the social and educational conditions of the society in question.

4.1.3. Innovation and modernization

Inevitably, a study on educational innovation is linked with the ongoing debate on modernization and the concept of modernity. Not only in education are these concepts widely discussed and contested. Postmodernist theory questions the pre-eminence of the metanarrative "modernity" dominated by Western rationality and related philosophy, and favours instead the development and coexistence of "small" narratives, thus giving space to the autonomous development of ideas, practices and cultures. By reference to this debate, INNAE intended to illustrate the diversity of educational practice rather than to add another page to the modernization narrative. The pictures drawn were intended to result in a collage consisting of

different stories on innovation on the one hand, and on the other, a conceptual cross-analysis of the stories, starting from the experiences of the projects, taking into account the importance of the various ongoing debates in their fields of activity, and reflecting the learning process of the participants.

4.2. Proceedings (see also 5 below)

The projects selected were not analysed and described by external researchers, but by local partners involved in the projects. UIE's and DSE's role was to support the national participants in their research and documentation activities. But the project did not want to end up using a one-way support or teaching strategy, with "experts from the North" or the project coordinators providing "learners from the South" with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out the proposed research. On the contrary, a process of collective documentation and analysis was created, with the case study authors from the projects as the main actors. INNAE provided for two lengthy phases of field work and communication on the projects selected plus a series of seminars with all participants. Both field-work phases were followed by periods of reworking the case studies with the help of comments received from other INNAE participants.

4.3. Actors, tasks and responsibilities

Three groups of actors can be distinguished. The first group were the *case study authors* from the different innovative projects. They either worked in the respective projects as planners, coordinators, supervisors etc., or had been directly involved in their development and implementation as administrators, researchers or policy-makers. Secondly, a group of *consultants* cooperated in the development of the initiative. They were researchers and practitioners with particular experience in the field of innovations in adult education.[7] The third group were the *coordinators* from DSE and UIE, the organizing institutions, which jointly developed the initiative and shared responsibility for carrying out the project activities.

5. Project activities

INNAE is not only a project on innovative activities in adult education, but itself an innovation. Its very intensive collaborative working style and the kind of partnership developed among its members make INNAE different from other international research and cooperation projects. Here we will deal with the nature of the "collective learning" in INNAE.

The core of this collective learning was joint research on a group of adult education projects from various regions of the world. These projects were critically analysed as adult education practices which in responding to new demands creatively developed new and promising strategies. However, they were not presented as innovations *per se* or as necessarily

---

[7] Some of the consultants were asked to participate in the project because their special field of work was regarded as important for the subject of our research. This was, for example, the case of a consultant who is active in the field of women's education and of another whose special interest is the issue of North-South relations and multilateral and bilateral cooperation in education.

successful endeavours, but as practices which included some interesting innovative features in addition to other more conventional strategies. What was new about our approach, compared with conventional research strategies on innovation, was that it was built on a participatory process which aimed at both developing an understanding of innovative processes from the examples selected and at fostering reflection on concrete proposals for the future development of these experiences.

The methodology used in INNAE, which one could call an "emerging methodology", resulted from the participatory approach and developed through the interaction and joint work of all INNAE participants. The main aim of the three INNAE seminars was to provide the conditions and the space for a meaningful dialogue between practitioners and between them and researchers. With a variety of interests and working styles represented in the group, how the collective learning was best to be organized and most likely to be fruitful, was a matter of much discussion. The joint process was highly dependent on this discussion. Many decisions were only made during the course of the project and were initiated not by the coordinators but by the project participants. In the course of INNAE's implementation, its members were increasingly involved in monitoring and managing the research process.

5.1. Overview

Originally, INNAE comprised the following stages and phases:

Stage 1 Identification, documentation and analysis of relevant innovations (1993-1995)

Stage 2 Development of training materials based on the results of the innovation analysis (1995/96)

Stage 3 Dissemination of the results via orientation seminars and training workshops (from 1996/7 onwards)

Stage 1 was further divided into the following three phases:

Phase 1: Preparation (1993)
Selection of innovative projects. Development of a methodology for the description and analysis of innovative projects. Planning meeting: December 1993

Phase 2: Field phase 1 - analysis (1994)
Preparation of case studies (drafts). Review seminar: October 1994

Phase 3: Field phase 2 - synthesis (1995)
Review of case studies. Comparative analysis of selected projects. Synthesis seminar: September 1995

This project plan was seen as a proposal which would have to be reviewed in the course of the project. As will be seen later, this was indeed what happened. The training strategy originally proposed for stage 3 of the project was changed by the project participants. INNAE developed quite differently from what had been expected.

5.2. *Selection process*

The selection of projects was determined by several criteria such as regional distribution and diversity of working fields.[8] The cases selected also had to be significant for other countries. Some of these cases deal with new educational demands, while others respond to demands by new groups of actors. The issues addressed had to be relevant to the current discussion of non-formal education at national and international levels (improvement of quality of life, women's education, participation by learners, etc.). Finally, projects selected had to have been sustainable over a certain period of time.

With a set of projects selected on this basis, identifying and studying the characteristics of those experiences was the core of our joint work during INNAE. As we did not assume the projects to be "pure" model innovations, but to include both conventional and new strategies, the analysis focused on the innovative components of the projects. Difficulties encountered in developing new strategies, and the shortcomings and failures revealed throughout the project, were not excluded from this analysis. In accordance with the working definition of innovation (see 4.1.3 above), the emphasis was put on the specific local conditions under which the innovations were developed and implemented.

5.3. *Preparing analytical descriptions of projects: What framework to use? (planning meeting)*

The overall perspective which INNAE should follow, and the focus of the case studies, were closely related to the question of how innovations were to be understood. What does innovation in adult education mean? The discussion mainly centred around two perspectives. The first perspective saw innovation in terms of an exceptional or specific event outside ordinary practice. According to this perspective, innovations can be observed and singled out from other practices, and follow specific objectives which go beyond the aims of conventional practice, i.e. the learning outcomes for participants. As far as their results are concerned, these can be clearly distinguished from what other methods have achieved. According to this view, innovations are often understood as the result of an extraordinary and highly creative act by some person or persons specifically engaged to design an innovative measure. Hence, innovation is seen as a practice which clearly stands out from the routine activity of running a project and which is carefully designed and planned as such.

The second perspective assumed that innovation is a necessary and continuous process of educational activity. Innovation is the result of creative activity by those who organize and participate in an educational event. As educational demands are raised and responses are developed, new or so far unknown strategies constantly occur. During the implementation of a project, as conditions change, new responses have to be developed, so that existing practices are revised and renewed, and innovations are made. In this view, innovation relates to a regular type of activity. Innovative strategies are implemented alongside conventional

---

[8] In the search for instructive innovative experiences, two principal channels of information were used. An inquiry was made among more than 35 UNESCO offices in various regions. Projects known to the researchers at DSE and UIE and to colleagues in other institutions were also contacted as possible candidates for participation in the project.

practices. It is not only extraordinary developments that are innovative, but also small changes which at first do not seem to be very different from former strategies.

To summarize, two perspectives on innovation were present in these discussions, the first adopting a more "elitist" notion of innovation, and focusing on its product or result, the second seeing "innovativeness" as an inherent characteristic of all educational activity and emphasising the process of innovation as more or less regular practice.

As far as research on innovation is concerned, the first perspective implies the identification of innovative strategies, concepts and models in order to make them transferable and to develop them as tools for use in other education contexts. Innovations are assumed to be adaptable to different conditions. For INNAE, following this approach would have meant developing a research strategy in order to prepare training seminars and project descriptions. These would have focused on instruments derived from the cases studied that could be used to implement innovations in other education projects.

Contrasting with this view, the second perspective stated INNAE's primary aim to be the development of an exchange between different projects, all of which include innovative components. The intention was that through the joint analysis of different innovative strategies, educational practitioners could not only reflect on their own activities, but come up with ideas for further developing and transforming these practices. At the same time, documenting and discussing innovative practices would enable participants to look critically at the mainstream understanding of innovative developments in adult education in the respective region. The proposed strategy would be based on the premise that dialogue between practitioners — the collective studying of innovative practices — combines research with dissemination.[9]

Case study authors had a decisive voice in the debates on INNAE's research strategy and expected outcomes, which in the end led to a rejection of the training workshops originally planned. They made it clear that they had no interest in merely describing the activities they were engaged in, thus only providing the "raw data" to be interpreted and used by others. If they had agreed to participate in INNAE, it was because of the prospect of reflecting critically on their projects and comparing their successes and failures with other experiences. Moreover, it was clear to the authors that the case studies as well as their interpretation should not lead to a product which would focus on theoretical questions of innovation, but which would rather tackle more practical issues likely to be of interest to other educators and policy-makers. An intensive discussion of INNAE's aims revealed the different interests represented in the group.

One of the main questions was, for whom the results of INNAE were intended. Whom should they address? For some, the clear priority of INNAE was to provide educational practitioners with information which would allow them to reflect on and to improve their own practice. For others, their individual process of reflection was most important as they hoped through INNAE to find new ideas to expand and improve their own work. Still others were more interested in research questions such as a how innovative projects emerge and how they influence conventional practice. Such conceptual questions contrasted with another view on INNAE which focused on its potential as policy-oriented analysis. According to this point of view, the research on innovations should be made a tool for influencing policy development

---

[9] According to this view, the project would not have to be conceptualized in two distinct phases, the research and the dissemination stages (see 5.1 Project Overview), but both would be implemented in one phase.

at national and international level. With these divergent perspectives, the debate centred on whether INNAE should have a more "theoretical" and/or a more "practical orientation", and on whether it should focus rather on the process or the product.

5.4. Preparing and discussing case studies (field research and communication phases)

The original idea of UIE had been to focus the case studies on the perspective of the learners. At the *planning meeting*, a research methodology had been proposed which would concentrate on data collection through unstructured interviews with learners involved in the project being studied.

For UIE, to find out about the results of the project for the learners was the key to assessing the success of an innovative experience. This interest was only partly shared by the other INNAE participants.[10] They felt that the case studies should mainly deal with aspects such as the organizational structure or the teaching strategies, which they thought more interesting for other educators and projects trying to be innovative in their own work.

The individual research and writing of case studies was followed by phases of commenting on and discussing the texts[11]. The idea was that in between the seminars, collective work would continue through written communication. This correspondence phase was intended to be a forum in which all authors, consultants and coordinators could engage in a discussion on the case studies. What happened in fact was more of a one-way communication, with case study authors receiving many different and sometimes contradictory comments on their work. The difference in position between writers on one side and consultants/coordinators on the other was evident.[12]

---

[10] Many of the case study authors felt that with the limited time and financial resources available for the field work, it was impossible to adopt the proposed focus. In December 1993, the project started with only seven case study authors. Other projects joined INNAE during the early months of 1994. For these projects there was even less time for the field work and the preparation of the case studies. Some of the participants would have liked to engage assistants to help them carry out interviews but the limited budget of INNAE did not allow for such activities.

[11] First drafts of case studies were prepared in spring 1994 and circulated among all project members. A second phase of research and case-study writing followed after the review seminar (October 1994). Again, these new versions were to be discussed by the whole group before the final synthesis seminar which took place about a year later.

[12] Sustainability of interest and effort and the conflict over participants' roles were a problem during the field and communication phases. The difficulties increased during the second phase of field work and case-study writing, which began after the review seminar in October 1994 and took another six months. Case study authors were again invited to react to comments and to review their studies. For some authors this was the third time they had reviewed their texts.

5.5. *Analysis of the experiences presented in the case studies (review seminar)*

At the review seminar, the focus of discussion was on the common analysis of innovative features documented in the case studies.[13] The challenge for the review seminar was to develop from these experiences a set of questions which were relevant to a broader discussion on innovative approaches in adult education. The task was to bring together concrete action and theoretical reflection on global questions, and to find common themes and questions without losing touch with the original aspects of each experience.

The method which we adopted was to collect the common issues and questions which appeared in the case studies, and to use these as tools for further analysis. These themes, which were called **transversal issues**, enabled us to identify within the particular experience of each project those items which were similarly experienced in other countries and regions, and were thus of greatest interest from a global perspective.

The following five **transversal issues** were identified:

- *Change and integration in innovations:* Innovative practices try to develop new coping mechanisms which allow people to deal critically with the complexities of social and cultural change which they have to face in their present-day societies. The experiences of the project reveal that through educational intervention, participants take part in processes of change and integration ("disembedding" and "re-embedding" and deconstruction and reconstruction), at the personal (identity) as well as the social levels (roles and tasks). In some, there is a cyclical process whereby changes become integrated, laying the ground for further change.

- *Participation and partnership, sustainability and transferability*: Transferability was probably the most highly debated concept in our group. Can innovations be transferred? What can we learn from other projects? Innovations originate from a specific situation and are highly determined by the creativity of the so-called innovators. Thus, the recipe model cannot work.
  Partnership refers to new forms of networking and collaboration between different actors from the community, the NGO and government, between teachers and learners, between researchers and practitioners, and to the difficulties implicit in these alliances.

- *Needs*: "Who needs what, as defined by whom?" was the central question of our discussion. Ideally, education projects aim to respond to the needs of their participants. But what are people's "real" needs? And, who determines what adults need to learn? Are there such things as "objective" needs? Needs are changing and so are people's demands for learning. How do adult educators respond to such needs and how do projects adapt to new needs which evolve? These were key questions in our debate on innovations.

---

[13] New projects from India, Palestine, Bangladesh and Burundi participated in this seminar, which was held in October 1994 in Berlin. Case studies on these projects had been prepared before the meeting. Unfortunately, the latter two projects could not participate in the next phase of rewriting, so that these case studies remained unfinished, could not be considered in the work on the transversal issues, and are not included in the final publication.

- *Empowerment* : Empowerment, as a fashionable term, is easily adopted as an objective of adult learning programmes, but difficult to realize. In the specific economic and political circumstances of individual projects, empowerment rarely seems to be all-encompassing but to focus on specific items. However, from a global or a theoretical standpoint, these may seem to be too narrow. As far as strategies are concerned, the main approaches propounded are conscientization and skills training. But is conscientization still a valid strategy? What can conscientization projects achieve? On the other hand, what about those projects which focus on skills training?

- *Pedagogy*: The issue of pedagogy emanated from the group's recognition of a variety of strategies and approaches in the projects, which organize adult learning in new and significant ways. All these attempts appear to build on people's problem-solving capacities, their flexibility and imagination, and the discovery of various human resources. From this observation, the issue was first discussed under the headline of "creativity". Later on, these strategies were looked at in terms of educational practice. However, this perspective was rejected by another view, according to which the INNAE cases show that the conventional concept of teaching is too narrow and that many other factors play a key role in the teaching/learning process.

The **tranversal issues (TIs)** identified necessarily lifted our discussion to a more abstract or theoretical level. With the TIs as a framework for our discussion we developed a method of analysis which gave space for both those in our group who represented local experience and those who were more familiar with the theoretical questions currently being debated at the international level. But the danger of losing touch with and misinterpreting the actual experiences of the projects remained. An associated difficulty was the role of case study authors and consultants/coordinators. At times during the process, attempts were made to fit the experiences into categories and ideas derived particularly from the consultants' and coordinators' backgrounds. Case study authors were sometimes too ready to accept generalizations made by others about their case studies. Others clearly felt that they had the creative interest and the right to reflect on and to criticize the theories brought forward by the consultants and coordinators.

Working with the five **transversal issues** selected, we nonetheless engaged in a process of joint analysis of the cases. This was not governed by the idea that models of innovative practice would necessarily be derived from the examples selected. Nor did we consider the projects to be carefully chosen success stories bearing a set of meaningful lessons to be copied by other projects. Discussion of the innovative aspects of the INNAE cases around the TIs clearly revealed that any development of theoretical notions of innovative practice as lessons to be transferred to and used in other projects would lead to too high a level of abstraction, at which concepts would become artificial and meaningless. While such ideas would certainly sound convincing and seem easily applicable in other situations, in reality it would be difficult for other practitioners to relate their own practice and the conditions of their projects to such clinical concepts. What, then, were the possible ways of disseminating innovations? Again, the question of INNAE's aims was discussed. Since it was clear that the aim of our work was not to come up with descriptions of success stories and a set of model innovative strategies, the original idea of training seminars for disseminating innovations became obsolete.

The review seminar revealed that we were working with a methodology of analysis which was not given but had to be created. But the inductive and flexible strategy which we had adopted was essential for the success of our work. Because the process was not predetermined, new ideas could appear and be taken up. Consequently, disagreement over the methodology to be used and the aims of INNAE was one of the main driving forces behind our analysis and a key factor in taking the process forward. Contributions from case study authors, consultants and coordinators provided the theoretical and practical inputs from which our collective analysis emerged.[14]

5.6. Preparing the outcomes of INNAE (synthesis seminar)

5.6.1. What kind of publication?

As for the publication, the proposal put forward at the review seminar clearly indicated the direction participants wished the process to take: towards a joint writing of the text, involving all INNAE participants as widely as possible. The three-part structure of the present book was proposed.[15] The third part of the book, containing the analysis of the innovative experiences, was to be developed on the basis of the **TIs** by groups of participants. Each **transversal issue** had been given a "convener" who would, together with other colleagues, prepare a text for the third chapter of the book in the form of a dialogue or a debate between several persons.[16] Work on these texts was to start after the review seminar and to develop through correspondence over a period of several months until shortly before the final synthesis seminar of the first stage.[17]

The designers of the **TIs** had had a specific concern. They felt that the objective of the third part of the publication should not be to come up with definite answers or final conclusions to the questions raised in the case studies, or be limited to the responses provided by the projects selected. Instead, the texts on the **TIs** should present the main questions brought up in the case studies, reflect the discussions in the group and invite further reflection. The group believed that such a text could be more easily developed if prepared by a team rather than by a single author.

---

[14] The importance for the project of direct communication and personal discussion cannot be denied. The approach was not only new for most of us, it was also transformed during the project. Only through intensive interaction between all participants could an understanding of the method develop. It is not surprising that the the texts on the **TIs** could not be developed as planned by correspondence. Direct contact was obviously needed, and work on these issues was successfully completed at the last INNAE seminar.

[15] As the reader can see, this structure has been adopted. The first part contains the introduction, in the second part the case studies are presented, and the third part includes the results of our joint analysis of the cases presented.

[16] The role of convener was shared by case study authors, consultants and coordinators.

[17] Conveners had to prepare introductory statements for these discussions, which were then to be sent to all other members of INNAE inviting them to react. A discussion group was to be constituted and through comments and reactions a written dialogue was expected to evolve. The conveners' role was to coordinate communication (via faxes, telephone calls, letters, e-mail), and to collate the different contributions.

In the end, the third chapter was produced during the synthesis seminar. Introductory statements on each issue had been prepared and circulated beforehand, but the intended correspondence had not developed. At the synthesis seminar, we worked in small groups preparing the contributions for the third part of the book. The main challenge for the groups was how to assess the innovative aspects of the projects. Attitudes were divided over what was seen as a successful strategy and what was deemed to be less innovative and unlikely to be of interest for other projects. It was expected that not only diversity but also criticism of the projects should be included.[18] One issue, for example, was whether gender sensitivity is a prerequisite for all adult learning projects which aim at empowerment. Another issue related to change in social and political structures, reflecting concern with empowerment as an aim of educational projects. Should the primary aims of educational activities be at the level of personal relationships? Or, if we seek to have an impact on social and political relationships, what is the role of skills training in this process?

5.6.2. Other dissemination strategies

According to the original project plan, a number of different dissemination strategies were foreseen. Besides the publication, it had been suggested that training seminars should be developed from the innovative experiences documented in the first phase of the project.

How could the experiences collected and discussed in INNAE best be made available to other adult educators, policy-makers and researchers? The main problem about dissemination was how innovative strategies could be diffused without becoming "models" or abstract guidelines which ignored the cultural context from which they emerged and did not link with the realities of other educational programmes. INNAE's strategy proved to be most successful in terms of joint building of knowledge on innovative strategies. Follow-up activities to the first stage of INNAE, in the form of seminars, similarly had to avoid becoming one-way transfers of knowledge and skills. The analysis of the INNAE cases had revealed the following: first, that innovative approaches are initiated as responses to specific problems not solved by traditional means, and secondly, that we could show how these strategies are embedded in and emanate from the specific local context. The solutions developed are as specific and context-bound as the problems they address. A mere transfer of innovative "recipes" thus appeared impossible.

Two regional follow-up seminars were proposed, both focusing on issues which arose from our analysis of the INNAE cases.[19] With this new round of seminars, INNAE as a process continued. The project shifted its centre to the South, as both seminars adopted a regional focus (Asia and Latin America) and both were held in the regions. New partnerships were developed, and the roles of UIE and DSE changed. In both cases, local partners (who were already involved in the first stage of INNAE) collaborated in the organization of the seminars.

---

[18] Only one group pursued the idea of the debate and produced a text in the form of a conversation between several persons.

[19] Both seminars were held in autumn 1996. The Asian seminar took place in Thailand and focused on adult education and survival skills. It looked in particular into issues of cultural and linguistic survival. The second seminar, organized in Colombia, pursued the debate on women's empowerment through adult learning.

Both seminars, although very different from what was originally planned, still represent a form of dissemination, not as a transfer of innovative strategies, but in the sense of providing a forum to develop further and disseminate our understanding of innovative developments in the present context. The process of research and dialogue on innovative practices continued. As in the previous meetings, the emphasis was placed on the individual and collective reflection on innovative processes and their prospects for further renewal. Questions such as to what problems innovations respond and what difficulties they encounter were debated.

As in the previous INNAE seminars, the new meetings adopted a view of innovation which goes beyond conventional concepts, and includes those activities which mainstream policies do not recognize as innovative strategies. Documenting and discussing such strategies were again acts of defining innovation. With such a perspective in mind, the seminars came up with strategies to make innovative practices better known to other educators and to policy-makers. On the basis of the experiences selected, a new analysis of developments and trends in the respective regions was sought. Focusing on new and so far unknown activities, this analysis has the potential to provide an alternative vision of innovative developments to that of mainstream policies. Moreover, it can suggest alternatives to the policies currently promoted by dominant political forces.[20]

6. Structure of the publication

This publication presents the outcomes of the collective research undertaken in INNAE. Part II of the book, following this introduction, contains the case studies prepared by the INNAE participants. The third part presents the results of our analysis of the projects selected. Since the **transversal issues** provided the framework for comparing the different experiences and understanding their innovative aspects, the third part is organized around these issues. Each of the five chapters addresses one of the transversal issues.

These texts were produced by groups of INNAE participants. Each text presents a number of questions related to the topic in question and discusses these questions on the basis of the experiences involved in INNAE. In each chapter detailed reference is made to the case studies in Part II.

The last chapter, on "new ways of learning", although presented in line with the other transversal issues, can also be read as a conclusion to the whole book, and takes up the most important issues dealt with in the various case studies and issue papers.

The following projects are presented in part two:

- *Mahila Samakhya* (MS), a women's project in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, trains rural women as hand-pump mechanics. Skills training combined with gender-focused attitudinal training has allowed women to acquire new status and identity. Literacy followed at a later stage of the project when demanded by the participants.

---

[20] If it is to influence policy in the region, the result of the collective analysis produced during the seminars will have to be fed into the public and political debate. Although the seminars themselves already provided an opportunity for bringing the experiences into the public domain, additional strategies are needed in order to turn these innovative concepts into powerful tools in the struggle for a reorientation of current adult education policies.

- The *GREAT* project in Sri Lanka aims at fostering indigenous development led by the people themselves and making use of local resources. In addition, GREAT brings in another theme, the limitations of theoretical formal university training for development workers as one reason for the failure of many government development projects.

- The Colombian project, *CAFAED*, is a non-formal continuing adult education programme starting with literacy and going up to high-school equivalency qualifications. The focus of this innovation has been to develop a continuing non-formal, flexible structure for individual instruction..

- The *Theatre-for-Development* (TFD) workshops, organized in Cameroon, Nigeria and other African countries, are similarly oriented towards working on the basis of participants' needs. The theatre work aims at initiating a process of communication and reflection on issues of relevance for the participating population. In contrast to other INNAE cases, it is not a project in the strict sense, but a methodology which can be used in various settings and can also be integrated into larger education or development projects.

- The Canadian example, *Question de compétences* (QC), is also not a project but a set of material developed for use in women's programmes in the field of vocational orientation. The focus of *Question de compétences* is to help women to become aware of their generic skills and to utilize them as competency when applying for jobs.

- The two previous cases both have to do with learning through conscientization. In the project *We got together...and?* (WGTA?), the learning process has a similar orientation. In this project, in workshops, young couples discuss marital problems linked to the current transformation of women's and men's traditional roles in society. Specially devised material is used by the "couple facilitators" to encourage learners to discuss their situations.

- The *Fisherfolk Environmental Education Project* (FEEP) from the Philippines also uses specially created material, i.e. comics, in workshops on environmental issues for fisherfolk. Against a background of marine degradation, diminishing economic resources and political domination, the workshops focus on strengthening fisherfolk's organizing abilities and introducing strategies for sustainable resource management.

- Building upon fisherfolk's knowledge of the environment is a key aspect of the philosophy of FEEP. The *Community Health Workers* school in Palestine has similarly developed a training programme for community health workers which does not exclude people's traditional and folk understanding of illnesses and treatment. By training as health workers the women develop new skills, which allow them to take on new roles in the community.

- The *Adult Education Teacher Training Course* (AETTC) in Kenya is an in-service distance education programme for literacy teachers. Its focus is on training facilitators for functional literacy.

Bibliography

Beck, Ulrich. (1994). *Risk Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bélanger, Paul and Gelpi, Ettore (eds.) (1994). *Lifelong Education*, Special Issue of *International Review of Education* 40 (Nos. 3-5).

Courtney, Sean. (1989). Defining Adult and Continuing Education. In: Merriam, Sharan B. and Cunningham, Phyllis M. (eds.), *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. San Francisco and Oxford: Jossey-Bass.

Dave, R.H. (1976). *Foundations of Lifelong Education*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Delors, Jacques. (1996). Education: the necessary Utopia. In: Delors et al. 1996.

Delors, Jacques et al. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to Unesco of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. Paris: UNESCO.

Faure, E. et al. (1972). *Learning to be. The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO.

Haggis, Sheila M. (1991). *Education for All: Purpose and Context*. World Conference on Education for All, Monograph I. Paris: UNESCO.

Illich, Ivan and Verne, Etienne. (1976). *Imprisoned in the Global Classroom*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative.

Innovations in adult basic education - INNAE. (1992). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, December. (Internal working document).

Lengrand, Paul. (1975). *An Introduction to Lifelong Education*. Paris: UNESCO.

Mauch, Werner. (1993). INNAE: An initiative on the process of innovation in non-formal and adult basic education. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, December. (Paper presented at the planning meeting).

Mauch, Werner and Papen, Uta. (1994). Innovations in non-formal and adult basic education (INNAE). Provisional analysis of the INNAE case studies. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, August. (Paper prepared for the review seminar).

Merriam, Sharan B. and Caffarella, Rosemary S. (1991). *Learning in Adulthood. A Comprehensive Guide*. San Francisco and Oxford: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, Jack. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco and Oxford: Jossey-Bass.

Peters, Michael (ed.) (1995). *Education and the Postmodern Condition*. Westport, CT and London: Bergin & Garvey.

Recommendation on the development of adult education. (1977). In: *Records of the General Conference, Nineteenth Session, Nairobi, 26 October to 30 November 1976*. Volume 1, Resolutions, Annex I. Paris: UNESCO.

Sandhaas, Bernd. (1992). Innovations in Adult Education (INNAE). Analysis of innovative learning systems in the field of adult education and the establishment of a multi-media knowledge delivery system. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education. (Internal document).

Street, Brian. (1994). What is Meant by Local Literacies? *Language Education* 8 (1-2) (Special Issue "Sustaining Local Literacies", Guest Editor David Barton).

Stromquist, Nelly. (1995). The Theoretical and Practical Basis for Empowerment. In: Medel-Añonuevo, Carolyn (ed.), *Women, Education and Empowerment: Pathways towards Autonomy*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education (13-22).

The process of innovation in non-formal and adult education (INNAE). An initiative in research and research based training. (1993). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, October. (Project description).

The Right to learn. Declaration of the Fourth Unesco International Conference on Adult Education, Paris, 19-29 March 1985. (n.d.) Toronto: International Task Force on Literacy.

Tuijnman, Albert and Kamp, Max van der. (1992). *Learning Across the Lifespan. Theories, Research, Policies*. Oxford: Pergamon.

UIE-DSE. (1993). Innovations in non-formal basic education of adults. Analysis, documentation and dissemination of relevant innovations to improve non-formal basic education of adults. Hamburg and Bonn, December. (Programme description).

UIE-DSE. (1994). Innovations in non-formal and adult basic education (INNAE). Analysis, documentation and dissemination of relevant innovations to improve non-formal and adult basic education. Hamburg and Bonn, August. (Project description, review seminar).

World Declaration on Education for All (1991). In: Haggis 1991.

INNOVATING FOR CHANGE: WOMEN'S EDUCATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

An Analysis of the Mahila Samakhya Programme in Banda District

Nirantar - A Centre for Women and Education
India

This paper is a case study of *Mahila Samakhya*, a women's programme, which is currently being implemented in Banda district in India. The paper documents the innovative processes that have led to the creation of new possibilities for women in the area. It also describes how these innovations have been sustained and continually renewed over the past five years. The innovations were broadly in the two areas of:

- transfer of technical skills
- introduction and maintenance of literacy among women.

1. Background of the programme

The *Mahila Samakhya* (MS) Programme was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1989 as an innovative project in three different states of India, namely Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat. Drawing upon the educational perspective contained in the National Policy on Education (1986), the MS Programme conceived of itself as an educational programme which would play a "positive, interventionist role" in the empowerment of women. This was reflected in the broad objectives outlined in the original MS policy document. Briefly, it aimed at building upon and supporting the credibility and experience of non-governmental organizations in working with women in the field of education to initiate a process of change whereby poor, rural women would move from a situation of "passive acceptance of their life situation" to one of "active self-determination of their lives and environment".[1]

---

[1] The organizational structure of the programme in the state is broadly as follows. At the apex level, the programme is coordinated by a registered society with the state Education Secretary as its ex-officio chairperson. Its executive committee is responsible for providing the overall direction to the programme and monitors its implementation. At the district level, the structure consists of a district implementation unit (DIU) with a district coordinator as its head. The DIU plans, implements and coordinates the programme at the district level. The DIU is responsible for coordinating the work of *sahayoginis*. The latter are full-time programme functionaries who oversee the work of ten village-level animators or *sakhis*. The sakhis in turn are seen as the initiating agency for setting up *Mahila Sanghas* or women's groups.

2.1. Banda district: A profile

In Banda district, the programme was initiated in approximately 100 villages spread over two administrative blocks - Manikpur and Tindwari. The programme has since expanded to cover another 100 villages in two blocks. Efforts are currently being made to include a third block.

Banda ranks among the five poorest districts in India. It is predominantly a rural area. The population of Banda in 1991 was 18 million. Of these, a little over 23% belong to the scheduled castes, mostly *Kols* and *Harijans*. The caste composition varies from one block to another: in Manikpur the scheduled castes constitute more than 30%, compared with 20% in Tindwari. The dominant caste group in the region are the landed upper caste *Thakurs*, who own and control a large part of the agricultural land.

The mainstay of the Banda economy is subsistence agriculture. Roughly 60% of the working population in the district is engaged in cultivation, with another 26.5% working as agricultural labourers. The top 5% of the landed peasantry own more than 22% of the total cultivable land. An overwhelming majority (76%) of the cultivators are small and marginal peasants, with average holdings of one acre (0.4 hectares) each. Only a small fraction of these holdings is irrigated, the rest being dependent on the vagaries of the monsoon.

Commercial farming is virtually absent in Banda. Almost the entire cultivated area (99.2%) is devoted to the production of foodgrains and pulses for subsistence. Productivity levels are low. With current prices as the basis, average earnings from agriculture come to about Rs 100 ($3) per month. The situation is no different for landless agricultural labourers, the wages for agricultural work in Banda being among the lowest in the country.

About two-thirds of the 18 million people in Banda are illiterate. Illiteracy is even higher among women and lower castes, the literacy rate for women being a fraction over 16%. In certain parts of the district, this figure dips even further: in Manikpur block, a mere 8% of women are literate. Indeed, there are many villages in the block where it is difficult to locate even a single literate woman. Perhaps the one most important indicator of the abysmal status of women in Banda district is the sex ratio: 842 women for every 1000 men.

And yet nothing in the figures presented above can quite depict the impossible combination of poverty and violence that characterizes Banda. The two are of course closely linked, but violence in Banda has a further source. This is the nexus between highly organized gangs of dacoits and robbers, on the one hand, and the state apparatus and the political parties, on the other. In large tracts of Banda, it is the writ of the *Dadua* (the head of the most powerful local dacoit gang) which carries more weight than the pronouncements of the state.

What strikes one with renewed horror and shock on each visit to Banda is not just the extent of poverty and deprivation but the sheer magnitude of the violence that confronts women in the minutiae of their everyday social and personal life. The forms and sources of this violence are numerous. From "traditional" upper-caste violence against lower-caste women to physical and sexual abuse by dacoit gangs. There is also the constant threat from forest guards and the police when poor women do their daily round of the forest to collect wood for fuel and other minor forest produce.

And then there is violence within and between families. The strategies that exist for resolving marital and other family disputes are extreme. Wives are not simply sent back to their parents' homes in the case of a dispute. This is reflected in the innumerable cases of murder or burns inflicted on women that MS handles on a regular basis. Given this context, there were serious doubts about the possibility of initiating a women's programme in the

district, particularly a programme such as MS which sought explicitly to raise issues of gender discrimination, violence and inequality.

2. The Mahila Samakhya programme: Origin and structure

2.1. Setting up an independent unit

The history of the MS programme in Banda has fallen into two distinct phases. In the first phase, lasting about fifteen months, the programme was run by an NGO that was already working in the district. Later evaluation summed up this phase as lacking a gender perspective and being by and large restricted to limited "educational" activities. One hundred NFE (non-formal education) centres for children were started with male instructors. The *sakhis* who were identified related to these instructors. The *sahayoginis* were cast in the role of "inspectors" who checked whether the *anudeshaks* (i.e., instructors) and the *sakhis* were performing their assigned roles or not. The second phase of the programme began in October 1990 and saw a radical change not just in terms of structure but also in the approach towards the issues and priorities for women in the district.

First, the district implementation unit (DIU) set itself up as an independent, autonomous unit, moving out from the NGO within which it had been located. The newly-formed DIU team evolved the following strategies to help the programme to take off:

- Encourage collective processes of learning and reflection
- Build the self-confidence of its functionaries
- Set up lateral rather than vertical linkages within the programme
- Establish a participatory and democratic style of leadership.

2.2. Building an understanding of the area

The team shifted the focus of the programme to generating an in-depth understanding of the life situation of women at the village level. The emphasis was now on cluster-level meetings of *sakhis* and intensive village-level meetings involving the district implementation team, in which the latter interacted intensively with local women. These meetings were rich training grounds for understanding the class, caste and gender dynamics specific to Banda for both the DIU and the *sahayoginis*.

These village-level interactions led to a demand for all manner of information about government schemes. How are applications made for widows' pensions? Which government department is responsible for the repair and maintenance of hand-pumps? What is the quota entitlement of a family through the public distribution system? This emerged as a crucial area of intervention, given the acute problem of benefits and schemes reaching those entitled to them. Corruption, lack of information and red tape were the primary factors at work in maintaining the status quo of an inadequate and inappropriate delivery system.

It soon became clear that MS would have to play a crucial role in providing the vital link between the system and the beneficiaries. The MS group had to build its own ability to make this information available in an accessible form. Learning took place by encouraging

sakhis and *sahayoginis* to attend meetings of the local bureaucracy regularly rather than relying on the DIU to provide this information.

This initial phase of being the "translators" soon shifted to generating debate and discussion at the programme and village level on the relevance and adequacy of different development schemes, and to a critique of the system.

2.3. Training on gender, class and caste and identification of key areas of work

Intensive residential training courses for *sakhis* and *sahayoginis* were organized by the DIU team. This training provided the basis for looking at women's own experiences vis-à-vis gender, caste and class and assumed that:

- Learning is best conceived as a process rather than in terms of outcomes.
- Learning involves transactions between people and their environment.
- Learning involves the resolution of conflicts.
- Learning is a process of creating knowledge.
- For women, building their self-confidence is central to the process of learning.

At the end of six months, two areas of work were identified. One was the acute scarcity of water in Banda. International Women's Day in March 1991 provided the platform from which this was articulated. March 8th saw the completion of a survey carried out by the *sahayoginis* on the state of the hand-pumps in Manikpur block.

The survey revealed that more than 50% of the hand-pumps had remained inoperative for a period of more than six months. This situation became a rallying point for the women as water collection was their responsibility. The drudgery, constant pressure and anxiety related to the search for clean water made women rather than men experience the problem most acutely. *Sakhis* presented the findings of their survey at the collector's office and protested against the utter inadequacy and negligent maintenance of the existing water supply system.

The other issue taken up was the need for women themselves to learn to read and write.[2] Interactions with structures of power and government require access to a crucial determinant of power: the ability to read and write, which till now *sakhis* had argued against. This need for literacy skills therefore represented a major shift, and many motivational plays and songs were created by the *sakhis* and *sahayoginis*, providing reasons why women needed to be literate.

---

[2] An interesting case linked to the issue of water established this need. Ram Bai, a *sakhi*, took an application for the installation of a hand-pump in her village to the block-level office. The clerk at the office signed the paper acknowledging the receipt of the application. Being illiterate, Ram Bai mistook this for an acceptance of the demand for a hand-pump. She misinformed people in her village, saying that a new hand-pump had been approved.

3. Water and literacy: An innovative approach

A year of frustrated efforts, by the MS *sahayoginis* and *sakhis*, lobbying for the installation of new hand-pumps and repair of old ones, gave rise to a new question - why can't women have access to this technology themselves and manage their own hand-pumps?

For the DIU, this question opened up the possibility of taking on a new area of work — training women as hand-pump (HP) mechanics. MS's decision to enter delivery-oriented work was a significant break from an approach that had so far seen itself as a pressure group on the administration.

On the surface, water appeared to be a neutral area — a need experienced by all, whether they were upper caste *Thakurs* or *Kols* or the dreaded dacoits. But conflicts were inevitable in a society so defined and regulated by caste hierarchies. Being linked strongly to notions of purity and pollution, the sharing of water among different castes is socially taboo. Water is a primary medium through which social boundaries between different caste groups are maintained. Even today in Banda, where only one source of water exists, the upper castes do not allow the lower castes to draw water directly but pour it out for them separately.

In addition to this were all the dynamics that come into play in a poor, subsistence economy with its struggles over control and access to resources.

3.1. Breaking stereotypes

A workshop was hosted by MS in June 1991 in which the possibility of training women as HP mechanics was discussed with UNICEF and Jal Nigam (JN) — the State Water Corporation.

The JN's initial response to the proposal was one of disbelief and scepticism at the concept of illiterate, poor, lower-caste women becoming technically capable and responsible HP mechanics. Being a government department, it also questioned the ability of an NGO group in handling delivery work on such a scale. Being young and female, the DIU had great difficulty in establishing their own credibility with the department itself.

However, with the support of those at the higher levels within the bureaucracy of JN, the DIU was able to institute the first HP mechanics' training for women. Despite their lack of faith, the JN mechanics and fitters found themselves involved in a 10-day training course for women mechanics in October 1991. Fifteen village women came to attend this first course. Sumitra, a hand-pump mechanic from the first training course, explains her reasons for joining thus: "I had been collecting wood for the last 10 years. Carrying 40 to 45 kgs on my head, walking 10 miles a day to sell it. I was tired of doing this. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life doing this back-breaking work." Other women hoped that enrolling as a potential hand-pump mechanic would enable them to get a hand-pump approved for their villages.

The training was primarily "on the job", with HPs being repaired during the transfer of technical skills. Each day, two trucks, covered with banners, carried the trainers, the fifteen trainees and the MS staff. On arrival, the atmosphere generated was one of great enthusiasm and excitement with the beating of drums, singing of songs, putting up of posters and banners — the community not having a choice but to take note. There was a division of labour — with

the JN managing the skill transfer and the MS team handling the creation of the environment and communication.[3]

The success of the effort led to the formulation of a year-long project, with MS, UNICEF and the JN collaborating in developing a community-based programme on HP maintenance. It also sought to upgrade and simplify maintenance of the water supply system by a phased conversion of India Mark II into Mark III hand-pumps.[4] Secondly, the aim was to empower women and the community through the acquisition of skills and the setting-up of village water committees. The project also aimed to ensure that scheduled-caste villages had access to their own sources of drinking water and had the same rights as other communities in planning, managing and maintaining them.

3.2. Educational processes within technology transfer

Initially, the JN mechanics would not let the women handle the tools. Here the resource person from UNICEF intervened effectively, encouraging women to help in the demonstrations. The women themselves argued that if they could carry headloads of wood weighing up to 40 kgs and walk miles, then they had enough strength to pull out water pipes from the hand-pump. From the very first day there was no compromise over explaining the technical aspects of the hand-pump to the women. Time was not a consideration. Whether the concept was grasped in the first or the tenth explanation, the assumption was that the women could handle the technical principles involved.

Whenever there were difficulties in grasping complex technical issues, innovative methods were found. For example, the women had difficulty in remembering the names of all the different parts of the hand-pump since these were in English. To cope with this, each participant was given a new name. There was of course much humour in the process of renaming — someone who was big and fat was called "cylinder", a short person was "check valve", those who were feared were called "wrench", etc. The repetitive use of these names finally made them a comfortable part of the women's vocabulary.

The women mechanics had constantly to cope with their own feelings of fear and discomfort in working in such close proximity with men. The inhibitions of the women were a subject of constant discussion within the training course. The *sahayoginis* and DIU team played a vital role in helping women to overcome their feelings of unease.

There was also a difference in the manner in which the two organizations dealt with the issues of hierarchy and power. This initially resulted in a lot of conflict, as for example in the insistence by the DIU that everyone at the course should sit together and eat. These struggles over conflicting organizational cultures were reconciled through the intensive involvement with which the MS team interacted with the JN personnel. The role of JN mechanics and engineers as trainers was affirmed, and importance was placed on the experience of the local JN teams in dealing with the technical aspects of hand-pump repair and installation.

---

[3] The *sahayoginis* and the DIU team discussed with the villagers their problems regarding water and explained to them what Jal Nigam was doing. These discussions for the first time established the crucial link between Jal Nigam and the community.

[4] The repair and maintenance of Mark III hand-pumps was not as dependent on very specialized skills, tools and spare parts as that of the earlier Mark II hand-pumps.

It is significant that the MS brought to this educational activity much of the methodology and approach which it uses in its gender training. Games to "break the ice", exercises to reduce the hierarchy between trainer and trainee, songs to enthuse and capture experiences during the learning process, and role-plays formed part of the training strategy.

The team simultaneously adopted certain mainstream methods of evaluation and self-assessment which normally do not form part of participatory attitudinal training. This was seen as preparation for the harsh realities of the outside world in which they, as non-literate, poor, lower-caste rural women performing as hand-pump mechanics, would be open to prejudice and pressure from the community.

3.3. Combining gender and caste issues with technology transfer

Despite the seemingly "universal" nature of water as an issue and the "non-political" character of the maintenance and installation project, becoming an HP mechanic meant more than going through a training course to acquire technical skills. It meant struggles within the family, at the village and at the block level with the *patwaris* and *pradhans* (headmen).

Initially, there were always tensions in the villages about the women mechanics' ability to repair HPs. The women learnt also to cope with aggressive men who gathered and refused to let the women touch the hand-pump.

The issue of untouchability has been a pressing and recurrent one and has had to be constantly negotiated before repair work could be undertaken. In Bhauri village, the hand-pump that required repairs was installed outside the house of an upper-caste *pradhan* who initially refused to let the woman mechanic touch the hand-pump. There was a long argument in which the mechanics asked him whether he was more interested in their caste or in getting water to drink. The area around the hand-pump was so dirty that the mechanics refused to repair it till it was cleaned.

Over time, HP mechanics have built a credibility that goes beyond their own block. Villagers from neighbouring blocks have started calling these mechanics regularly to repair their hand-pumps, and their advice is sought whenever a hand-pump is installed in a village. Of greatest importance has been the recognition of the mechanics as individuals independent of their identities as mothers and wives. The change has been from being called "the wife or mother of so-and-so" to being called by their own names.

Of the 45 HP mechanics in Banda, more than half have had to face or still face violence from their husbands for their work as mechanics. Staying away from home for long periods, travelling on JN trucks, and working alongside male fitters, have predictably caused tensions in married life. Women mechanics have often been accused of being "loose, corrupt women". Maiki, a mechanic, deals with this, for example, by going to her parents' house for a few days. Tulsa is also beaten by her husband as he thinks that she should rather work as an agricultural labourer than as a mechanic. However, Tulsa has refused to give up her newly-acquired skill. She simply withdraws from her work during periods of acute tension with her husband only to resurface when the situation improves somewhat.

Besides providing a constant source of support, MS has responded to the issues of caste, class and gender faced by the mechanics by incorporating them as part of the training itself. Role-plays and other exercises have been employed to help the women open out and feel comfortable in each other's presence. This is a prelude to the kind of gender orientation that has been conducted with *sakhis* and *sahayoginis*. The idea is to help the women mechanics to

achieve a gender perspective in their own lives. The responses faced by the trainees in the village during the training have provided rich case material for analysis and discussion of women's issues.

3.4. Literacy programme

As *sakhis* took up issues of ration card distribution, corruption, payment of minimum wages, filling up of pension form applications and demands for the installation of hand-pumps in their villages, their need for the acquisition of literacy skills grew. All official work and interaction at the block level at some stage or the other involves paper work, which necessitates reading and writing skills. Inability to read official documents and printed matter also gave rise to the constant apprehension that they might be cheated into believing something that might not be the case.

The *sakhis* also perceived the move to becoming a *saheli* or NFE instructor as one that enhanced their status in the village and gave them greater respectability. This was a status that was self-earned since it did not derive from caste or class identity. Also, being a *saheli* meant not only moving up in the MS hierarchy but also a higher honorarium per month.

Since there was a here-and-now quality to the need for literacy skills, MS Banda adopted the camp strategy to make the *sakhis* literate. The camp method evolved as a strategy to cope with women's chronic problem of low and irregular attendance at NFE centres because of pressures of housework, childcare and other survival tasks. The camp was a 10-day residential training course, followed by two more 10-day camps held after a gap of a month each. The literacy camps had a high learner-teacher ratio (three learners to a teacher) and an intense, concentrated and continuous environment for learning was generated through the use of literacy games, songs and other innovative exercises. The method adopted to teach literacy at the camps was the word method.

Nearly 80 *sakhis* in Banda went through the three phases of literacy camps in batches of 30. The learners included not only the 80 *sakhis* but also some hand-pump mechanics.[5] At the camps, reading material for the women was developed, because the state-produced primers were found to be inappropriate in terms of both content and language. The primers focused on women as mothers or as targets for health messages for family planning and child immunization. The other problem was that they were in Hindi rather than in Bundeli, the regional language.

At the end of the three phases the learners acquired basic reading and writing skills. However, this literacy was extremely fragile and required intensive follow-up work. This was a particularly challenging situation as many *sakhis* were from remote villages where there were no other literate women. The problem of relapse loomed large after this intensive effort.

In addition, the *sahayoginis* who had been involved in the camps were exhausted by the intensive pace of teaching and learning in these camps. A sense of monotony had also begun to set in, and the *sahayoginis* strongly felt the need to move into activities that "energized" them. Within the MS programme, there was no vision of how the nascent skills of the neo-literate *sakhis* could be integrated with the issues that were being taken up in the programme so as to sustain and strengthen the former.

---

[5] The responsibility for conducting these camps was with the *sahayogini* group, who in turn were trained by Nirantar persons.

4. Sustaining women's learning

In both water and literacy, the question of sustainability came up again and again. As learning/training for MS was not a one-time activity or event but a crucial process of moving to improved capacities and new abilities, new procedures and processes were developed to sustain learning.

4.1. Water

After the high excitement of the first training course for HP mechanics, the DIU team were clear that they did not see their HP mechanics as mere helpers to the JN fitters, doing nothing more than grease parts, carry the tool kit and hand the required implements. Whatever was involved in being a professional team of mechanics was to be learnt, without developing a relationship of dependence with the JN. The idea was to make this batch of women trainee mechanics not only partners who were equal to the JN mechanics in skill, but also to create trainers who could go forward and train other women.

The procedures that emerged were that:

- The women mechanics would be on duty, by rotation, with JN mechanics for a stretch of four days each.
- Monthly women HP mechanics' meetings were held. These were intensive interactions, where technical problems as well as social issues were tackled with the support of the DIU and *sahayoginis*.
- Regular feedback was given by JN engineers and UNICEF personnel through demonstrations by the women HP mechanics.
- The HP mechanics were involved in the training of village water committee and caretakers. They were to form part of the training team in the case of caretakers.
- Exposure trips were organized to other HP maintenance projects.[6]

4.2. Mahila Dakiya

At this stage, MS sought the support of some current members of Nirantar, who were at that point located at the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) in New Delhi. The emerging

---

[6] A visit by the HP mechanics and some of the members of the JN to a project in the neighbouring state of Rajasthan where women have been working as HP mechanics revealed what is different and effective about the MS approach. Although the hand-pump mechanics in this area had been working for over five years, their level of technical skill and of confidence was low. The training that these mechanics had undergone was residential only for the trainees. No sense of collectivity had been encouraged. The mechanics there had to have the minimum educational qualification of having completed high school. The visit proved empowering not just for the visiting women mechanics from Banda but also for their trainers from JN. The men from JN were extremely proud of their "students". The visit did more to convince the JN of the effectiveness of the MS approach than all the vigourous discussions that had taken place in the past.

concerns from the literacy efforts undertaken by MS, and the question of sustainability of learning, found a resonance in the ongoing debate over issues of post-literacy (PL) which had arisen in the wake of the nation-wide launch of a series of total literacy campaigns. The questions that were central to this debate, and interested Nirantar as well, were the nature of the post-literacy material, and whether it was possible to produce PL material in a decentralized, participatory manner.

The mutuality of these concerns brought MS in Banda and the Nirantar group at NIAE together in exploring the possibility of bringing out material that would describe the work being done by MS on water while sustaining literacy-related activities and transferring skills in material production to the Banda education group. Three bi-monthly material production workshops were planned in which a mixed team of *sahayoginis*, neo-literate *sakhis* and hand-pump mechanics and *sahelis* were to participate alongside Nirantar members.

4.2.1. The process of skill transfer

As innovators, members of Nirantar were clear that their agenda was to enable the group to understand the basic principles of material production. The idea was to create a group of 20 women who would further train and involve other women in the process of production.

The content and nature of the three workshops varied in keeping with the different stages of learning the skills of material production. The first workshop addressed the difficulty that for the first time the women were to decide themselves on the content of the material they would produce. The second workshop introduced an in-depth analysis of issues of language, editing, various forms of writing, content, lay-out, etc. In the third workshop, the emphasis was on encouraging groups to take on responsibility for all aspects of production.

The fourth issue of the *Mahila Dakiya* was brought out by the core group quite independently of the facilitators. Subsequent issues of the *Mahila Dakiya*, which is still being published, have also been put together by this group.

4.2.2. The impact of the Mahila Dakiya

The *Mahila Dakiya* workshops were not just workshops that enabled the transfer of skills in material production to the neo-literate trainees, they were also an important point of confluence for the two streams within the MS programme — the water project and the non-formal education programme. *Mahila Dakiya* workshops provided the forum at which the women mechanics would represent, describe and give meaning to their intense and complex experience of change through a process of sustained collective reflection. This representation was aided and facilitated by the neo-literate *sakhis*, who played a crucial role in helping the women mechanics articulate their experiences in written form. In the *Mahila Dakiya*, the newly acquired competence and skills of the hand-pump mechanics and the neo-literate *sakhis* blended together to affirm and validate the achievement of both the processes.

The mechanics depicted not only the water-related struggles that they had taken up but also expressed the excitement of their new identity as women mechanics. They represented themselves as bicycle-riding mechanics whose excitement at their achievement was reflected in visual images of them on a cycle. The women mechanics recorded the change in their status in people's eyes: "First, when we started out, everyone in the village would taunt us about how we *kol* women were only capable of doing mindless kitchen chores. But today they call us to their homes, make us sit on the *charpai* (cot) and even offer us tea."

In sum, the *Mahila Dakiya* played the vital role of reinforcing the new identities and images that were emerging within the MS programme. The sight of their signatures at the end of the printed *Mahila Dakiya* gave the neo-literate *sakhis* a sense of both achievement and identity as literate women in the village community.

The *Mahila Dakiya* also became a medium for establishing the identity of the programme in the district itself. The *sahelis* read the *Mahila Dakiya* at the centres, sharing with the women the achievements of "their" very own programme. The *sahayoginis* and the *sakhis* distributed the *Mahila Dakiya* at the block level.[7]

The *Mahila Dakiya* also established a very real link between work and the use of literacy. The three-day workshops saw *sakhis* reading and writing energetically in whatever spare time they got from the production process. Besides all this, the *Mahila Dakiya* was read and re-read innumerable times by the *sakhis*, providing them with good practice material for honing their newly acquired literacy skills.

4.2.3. Literacy and HP mechanics

The MD workshops also called into question an important assumption which we had made, that as women acquired new technical capabilities or skills they would simultaneously experience the need for literacy. This belief had been somewhat strengthened by the hand-pump mechanics attending literacy camps. However, in the *Mahila Dakiya* workshops it became clear that the literacy levels of the mechanics were abysmally low. They could not even be placed within the category of neo-literates. In comparison, the *sakhis* improved their literacy skills extremely rapidly.

The mechanics found ways of getting round the problem of having to record the names and the numbers of spare parts used by them by either getting some literate person in the village to note this down for them or by simply keeping pictorial records.

Working as mechanics left them with little time to attend to their duties at home. As a consequence, they were always hard pressed for time to finish their household chores. Besides this, the fact that the honoraria they received every month did not suffice to take care of their financial needs resulted in a situation in which they still had to work as agricultural labourers or go and collect seasonal minor forest produce to supplement their income. Above all, their identity as hand-pump mechanics was so strong that there was a priority placed on sustained learning in this area. Thus, attending meetings for mechanics and participating in water committees and caretaker training courses took priority over all else.

The acquisition of literacy skills called for sustained effort and practice. The 10-day camps needed intensive follow-up to prevent relapse. But the hand-pump mechanics had neither the time nor the energy or resources to follow up the initial learning.

This is not to argue that literacy skills will never be attained by the hand-pump mechanics. The responsibilities of handling maintenance work at the block level and the new role of training women in other districts and states has created new challenges and introduced wider opportunities for interaction. This has resulted in the setting up of *Vanagana* — a registered society that aims at the possibility of starting income-generating activities with the women. The existing *Mahila Samakhya* structure cannot, or does not, provide for sustaining the work being done by the women mechanics. Therefore, *Vanagana* has been visualized as

---

[7] They gave copies of it to the Block Development Officer (BDO) and to the various *pradhans* (the headmen of the village) - to inform them about the activities of the programme.

a society that will involve rural women in defining the nature of work they wish to undertake to generate employment. The participatory nature of the society implies that the mechanics will have to take on new leadership roles and initiatives.

The planning and implementation of the *Vanagana* also requires a far greater understanding of macro issues and more direct and sustained interaction with structures of power. A few mechanics came forward in the literacy camps to make a serious attempt to learn to read and write. Whether this is an indication of leadership developing in the mechanics' group or whether there is the realization that there is no getting away from literacy, is not clear.

5. The emergence of fresh learning needs

As the innovations struck root in Banda, the women had to cope with new situations and questions that came up in the course of their work. These led to the need for new information, new skills and new structures among the group.

For the hand-pump mechanics, the experience of repairing hand-pumps and dealing with the acute water shortage in the summer months led to analysing whether this shortage was a new phenomenon or not. These questions led to discussions on the falling water table and an introduction to concepts such as underground water management, ground water storage, etc. This has initiated a vigorous interest in the larger environmental problems affecting the Banda region.[8]

The other broad area of concern is the link between water and health. HP mechanics have increasingly come to realize the direct correlation between the quality of drinking water and the health status of the consumers. The setting-up of the water testing unit and the women's participation in water committee training triggered off an understanding of the notions of germs, bacteria, hard and polluted water, and so on.

For the neo-literate *sakhis*, sustained upgrading of their own literacy skills has led to an active demand for training in teaching methodology. Those who have become *sahelis* and are running centres at the village level feel the need to improve their own methods of teaching.

Masonry has emerged as another area of skill training through the water project. Initially starting out as part of the water project, with the construction of HP platforms, it has grown so that women take on other construction work. A few newly trained women have already started undertaking construction work on a contract basis, with demands coming in from other women to be trained in masonry.

As the women HP mechanics established themselves, programmatic problems came to the fore. The MS structure did not contain any provision for accommodating the mechancis as part of its own structure. Who would pay the mechanics for the repair work? It could not be assumed that the women would take time out from their own survival tasks to provide this service free of charge. An effort was made to raise money at the village level itself, but this did not find any response within the community. Therefore, a move was made to get the JN

---

[8] In order to understand this phenomenon, a workshop was organized with a resource person who had considerable experience of working on environmental issues. Simple demonstrations and experiments were done with the group to illustrate underground water seepage, the impact of gradient on water flow, storage, reasons for soil erosion, etc.

to hand over the block to the women mechanics for maintenance and repair work. After another phase of lobbying in which the hand-pump mechanics were actively involved, the block was handed over to the group in January 1994.
But this is only a stop-gap arrangement. There is still a need for an organization that has the ability to support women who have acquired skills in new areas.[9]

5.1. Decentralization of the training process

An important shift that has taken place is the decentralization of the training process. As human resources have developed through different training inputs, new roles for workers have meant taking on responsibility for the expanding needs and coverage of the programme. Rather than be dependent on a small core team of trainers, MS Banda has attempted to identify those women who could be potential trainers and has provided them with specific inputs so that they can take on that role.

In the first training course, the JN staff handled the technical aspects. Over the four courses that have taken place, MS has increasingly taken over this responsibility. Even within the performance of this role, there has been decentralization. At first it was the *sahayoginis* who were the primary trainers. Now it is trained hand-pump mechanics who are assuming this role. A conscious effort has been made to develop the hand-pump mechanics themselves as trainers in terms of sensitivity to learners'needs, and working in coordination as trainers in a manner which is process-oriented and participatory. This has meant a much faster pace of learning for the recent batches of learners. Being trained by women who are in other respects like themselves has been a tremendous source of confidence.

A similar approach was followed with the literacy programme. Neo-literate *sakhis* were trained in teaching methods with the aim of seeing which of them could become not only instructors but trainers themselves. In the *Mahila Dakiya* workshops there was an attempt at identifying those who were good at lay-out, editing, writing and drawing, and these women were helped to develop their skills further. The idea was to create a group that could train other neo-literate women at the block level in material production.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Addressing the issue of power

The Banda case study validates the fact that education and empowerment are twin processes for women. Education presupposes a vision of the future, a movement towards what is not yet in being. For women whose world is defined and circumscribed not only by their social, political and cultural context, but also their gender, education acquires special meaning. It is not just a transfer of skills but it is as much a matter of how these skills enable them to negotiate better with their immediate lived context. Innovations in education for women therefore need to address not merely the question of evolving more "effective", "efficient" strategies and methods of skills transfer, but equally the question of how the women are going to put their learning into practice.

---

[9] The above-mentioned society *Vanagana* could fulfil this role.

In Banda, the empowerment question has continuously informed all kinds of learning, whether by helping the women mechanics to cope with their own inhibitions, by encouraging neo-literate *sakhis* to attend meetings independently of the *pradhan*, or by building the self-confidence of *sahayoginis* through the processes of information gathering and dissemination.

Therefore, implicit in any educational process for women is the question of existing power dynamics. Literacy practices challenge structures of power and the ideology that underpins them.[10] The *Mahila Dakiya* provides a most vivid example of how the acquisition of literacy skills by *sakhis* led to its becoming the medium through which existing caste and gender oppression was questioned and resisted. The new sense of identity and self-worth of the *sakhis* and hand-pump mechanics informed the way in which they organized the content and gave meaning and priority to specific events and experiences.

6.2. Moving beyond the conscientization model

An important point of departure for MS Banda was the innovative shift it made from other empowerment programmes for women. A critique of process-oriented, participatory programmes for women has been that they see their role primarily as being "critical of existing structures" and as making demands. Another limitation has been that in providing time and space to women and ensuring their participation, the process has sometimes become an end in itself.

By taking charge of hand-pump repair and maintenance work in a block and carrying out conversions to Mark III hand-pumps and setting up their own screen-printing units, the Banda team has combined process-oriented activities with concrete delivery work. Taking on the responsibility of managing and providing services efficiently at the village level has helped the programme establish and strike roots within the community.

6.3. The need for collaboration in innovation

It is evident that the innovativeness of the DIU is a result of the collaboration that it established with Jal Nigam, UNICEF and Nirantar. The role of the outsider in providing fresh ideas, new inputs and/or skills in bringing macro issues and concerns to the area has been actively encouraged. At the same time, there has been space for more democratic interaction with the collaborating agencies. Often, field-based implementing agencies' preoccupation with their own issues makes them view the outsider only in the role of an "input". By allowing the collaborating agencies' own agendas to become an important component of the programme, the MS team has created fresh areas of inquiry.

Nirantar's interest in exploring the possibility of involving neo-literates in participatory material production has helped MS to sustain the literacy levels of its *sakhis* and has generated an enthusiasm for learning. The water project incorporated research on the feasibility and

---

[10] The concept of "literacy practice" used here is that of Brian Street. See, for example, Street, "The Implications of the New Literacy Studies for the New South Africa", *Journal of Literacy Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 2, 1993.

economics of the Mark III hand-pumps, which was the major concern of UNICEF and Jal Nigam.[11]

6.4. *Creating new structures*

As capabilities were enhanced and new roles developed, the MS structure has become unable to support and sustain the hand-pump mechanics, and the need now is for an autonomous organization managed and controlled by the women themselves. This is of course a two-way process because the establishment of such a structure demands the creation of new abilities and skills. Learning to produce their own material through the *Mahila Dakiya* workshops has meant learning about printing technology and setting up a screen-printing unit. The possibilities of setting up an autonomous project that takes on printing commercially or starting a recycled paper unit are the new possibilities that require a new structure.

Training neo-literate *sakhis* to undertake the role of trainers themselves in literacy camps, and making women HP mechanics trainers, has meant decentralizing the innovation and has made it possible to shift from the notion of one innovation to that of an innovative process. The women are not merely repeating what was initiated by the innovator but are identifying the new areas for intervention and innovation.

6.5. *The case for macro linkages*

Banda points to the strengths of two kinds of innovator — those within the programme and those who are outside the main concerns of the field. The DIU in Banda has provided leadership by its in-depth understanding of the area and its incredible ability to enthuse women about the possibility of change. This it has combined with sensitivity to the new challenges and issues emerging during the programme, keeping the needs of the women as their central agenda.

In contrast, the collaborating agencies have not been constrained by the immediacies of implementation. Their linkages with other issues, concerns and areas of interest have provided for a healthy interaction between the field area and the larger context of development — providing a more holistic notion of change and empowerment for women.

---

[11] Quantitative data has been systematically collected in order to help the state water corporation to take a long-term decision on whether the conversion was viable and cost-effective.

GRADUATE RESOURCE ADVANCEMENT (GREAT): NON-FORMAL EXPOSURE OF YOUTH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

S.B. Ekanayake

National Institute of Education
Sri Lanka

1. Background and context

Graduate Resource Advancement (GREAT) was launched in 1992, and since then two groups of graduates have undergone training under this programme. Initially it was confined to two universities but in its second phase, in 1993, an additional university joined the programme, thus expanding the number of centres, where the work of the "graduate catalysts" was based, from 10 in 1992 to 25 in 1993. The duration of the field component was 3 months.

The aims of the field exposure were:

- Capacitation of the graduates in the identification of micro development issues, specific to the village community
- Development of the ability to prioritise the issues and engage in micro planning exercises
- Development of skills to identify resources in the local environment to solve the issues

The above objectives in field training for university graduates are the result of the gaps in university education vis-à-vis developmental aspects of the country. The theoretical perspective which dominates the teaching of development processes at university leaves aside the human aspect. As a result, students have very limited knowledge regarding broader aspects of life and society, and graduate with attitudes, expectations and abilities divorced from the country's social, economic and cultural realities and demands.

The second major issue relates to participatory approaches. These are vital if development is to be endogenous, without which a dependency syndrome will set in, militating against achievements in the long run. But at university, future development workers are not taught the capacity to bring about participation by the people in development in a meaningful way. Traditional development approaches, in which the people have seldom or never been consulted, still prevail.

With a view to overcoming these flaws in conventional development paradigms and in conventional university training, the GREAT project approached development as a participatory process and developed field training for graduates. It was felt that the best method for such training was the timely exposure of those who have to work with the people to learning from the people and from the realities of their lives.

The key aspects of the programme were that graduates:

- lived in the village,
- discussed developmental issues with the community,
- adopted communication techniques and listened to the people rather than 'lecturing' them, and
- developed and executed plans with the cooperation of the people.

The centres selected for the project were representative of different socio-economic and cultural characteristics and were widespread all over Sri Lanka. Some of the villages were from semi-urban areas while most of them were representative of rural and disadvantaged groups.

The purpose of selecting different types of village was to provide varied experiences to the graduate catalysts (GCs) and also expose the planners of the GREAT project to a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of development issues.

2. The dynamics of decision-making in the development of the innovative initiative

Rural development has been the focus of Sri Lankan governments for decades. Development plans following Western forms of delivery systems and approaches have originated from the top. Because of the bureaucratic structures, development efforts have culminated in a "critical scenario". Although it is true that over a period of time certain relatively positive changes have taken place in the rural communities, resources have by and large been shared unequally all the time, consolidating the privileges of the few.

The reasons for imbalance and stagnation in development are that indigenous styles of development have not been adopted and that variations in the people's desires have not been recognized. Hence, what has been presented to the people is crude forms and styles which do not take root in the cultural context.

Training programmes for development workers have not provided exposure to social and cultural issues, and deductive approaches have been considered more important than inductive processes. The GREAT project aimed at providing practical lessons in development.

The idea of engaging graduates in development emerged as a result of a few undergraduates who were attached as interns to the Non-Formal Education (NFE) Department of the National Institute of Education (NIE) in 1990. As a part of their work they were given certain tasks which required them to work in the field. This exposure, though small, was an ice breaker in their minds and they suggested that this kind of exposure to realities should be provided to all students either as undergraduates or graduates. The germination of the idea for the GREAT project was the end result of this exercise.

In the planning of the project at the macro level, the whole responsibility was on the NFE department, i.e., for selection of village centres and developing orientation programmes for graduates. Identifying issues for activities, finding resources, operationalising the activities, etc., were entirely the responsibility of the GCs and the local personnel. The villagers were involved by the GCs in all of the above mentioned activities at all levels and at all stages. There were committees set up for this purpose by the GCs. They were responsible for initiating activities after the departure of the graduates at the end of the project period.

For both phases, the project received financial support from NORAD.

3. The core and crux of the innovative solution

The core of the innovation was to bring about a change in the pattern of thinking on the methodology of development from the prevailing macro planning and top-down approach to a bottom-up micro planning strategy. In this the intervention of GREAT was to focus on:

- training of university graduates, and
- community education: micro-planning and participatory approaches.

The approach was unconventional, for never before had a group of graduates been placed as development interns at the village level to learn and work with the people on development.

GREAT was piloted nationally as an experimental project, with the aim of training university graduates in:

- identifying resources and understanding the nature of the developmental needs of the community, and
- designing and implementing development programmes.

4. The graduates' work in the villages

4.1. Contact with villagers

Their continuous stay in the villages enabled the graduates to gain in-depth insights into the real issues of the community. Through regular informal visits to people's homes and workplaces, the graduates developed a rapport of confidence with all village members. The close link between the graduates and the villagers helped to make them feel that the activities implemented with the graduates were more "their own" than "other people's".

The GCs were in no hurry, unlike those who generally come to collect data and interview people. They were prepared to sit with them and if they found people were too busy they would come again.

The GCs also identified issues rapidly in the communities, not through questionnaires and other statistical techniques, but rather through being with the people.

4.2. Introducing change

The project found that change agents — whoever they are, be it the state or NGOs — should not pursue the idea that development means drastic change without regard to existing social structures. The importance of social consensus for success is crucial. The vanguard for the implementation of the activities in the villages consisted of both young people and elders. The former were used by the GCs where physical labour and arduous work was needed. The latter provided financial and moral backing.

4.3. Developing leadership and organisation

The GCs developed a cadre of around eight persons from the village to take care of and follow up the activities that were implemented and planned during their stay. As a result, this group was in regular contact with the NFE department of the NIE.

Mobilising of local resources, such as institutions, personnel and materials, for a common purpose was another strategy that the GCs adopted. Sri Lankan society has inbuilt traditional social institutions and mechanisms whereby people help each other. Because of the dependency syndrome which has set in as a result of the new international economic order that has crept even into the micro-level social fabric, these positive tendencies have either been lost or lie dormant. The GCs tried to revive them.

Pooling of resources and unpaid labour for a common purpose were adopted successfully in the building of pre-schools (in Gonewa, Siddiarawa, Rotumba, Badalkumbura and Bagawantalawa) and a library (Palletalawinna). Through this mobilisation it was possible for the GCs to achieve what had been thought by the communities of these villages to be impossible. In fact there were instances in some villages where efforts to pool resources prior to the coming of GCs had not been successful. In all the projects, the GCs were able to mobilise at least twice as much from the community, in both services and materials, as the funds provided by the NIE department. In some centres the value of the services was ten times as high.

For sustainable development people have to be made aware of their capacity and strengths. This can come through exposure to practical situations. The GCs adopted the strategy of mobilising the people to meet appropriate authorities in relation to development issues in their communities. This had a positive effect on the GCs themselves. Meeting persons in the state sector or elsewhere was a learning experience for them, teaching them to understand the channels of authority. They were thereby able to make use of unpaid labour from state institutions, as in Gonewa, Siddiarawa and Bagawantalawa, where they used the services of the police, the army and trade unions to assist in development work.

4.4. Conflict

Another important role the GCs played relates to their interventions to solve long-standing conflicts. These conflicts had adversely affected the development of communities, delaying the construction of a road or unnecessarily holding up the development of a pre-school or a health programme, etc.

The GCs attempted to introduce natural justice as far as possible, and for this they adopted two methods: firstly, developing activities from which every one could benefit equally, such as provision of pre-schools, construction of wells and roads; secondly, involving the community in the selection of beneficiaries if only a selected number could benefit.

Such approaches avoided undesirable elements in decision-making, such as political favours, bias in the appointment of staff, and official vested interests. When responsibility for decisions is given to the people of the "culture of silence", initially they may move somewhat slowly but eventually they become confident in assuming leadership. This was demonstrated in the village of Siddiarawa, where the people decided who should be given priority in getting the limited number of tiles for houses.

5. The organisational structure of GREAT

GREAT was implemented under the leadership of the Non-Formal Education Department of the National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka, its director being the chief coordinator of the project. An advisory committee involving representatives from the participating universities, from the funding agency (NORAD) and NGOs was established. The detailed planning of the project was done by an implementation committee, which involved staff from the universities, from the NIE and NGOs as well as the school principals and community leaders from the participating villages.

Reporting mechanisms were established, in the form of monthly reports by the coordinators of each centre to the NIE. Supervisors visited the centres on a regular basis and reported in a log book. Graduates were provided with field books in which to note their daily experiences.

6. Orientation of the graduate catalysts and the coordinators

Before the GCs were sent to their respective centres, an orientation programme (OP) was conducted over a period of three days. The participants included both GCs and centre co-ordinators.

The objectives set for the OP were:

- To provide skills in identifying development issues
- To introduce methods of learning from the people
- To provide skills in methods of planning development projects
- To explain the significance of endogenous development

The orientation workshop consisted of two parts. Part 1 dealt with the background information needed for the participants for vision building. Part 2 focused on the skills needed to carry out the programme at the field level. A certain amount of time was also spent on the methods of living and patterns of behaviour demanded by the specific environments.

7. Project activities

7.1. Activities initiated by the graduates

In this section, a summary of the activities of centres will first be provided. All centres had one major activity while a number of supporting sub-activities were also carried out.

The GCs were expected to plan two or three activities for the whole period, of which one could be the major one. Among the major activities were:

- Construction of toilets, wells, roads, pavilions and playgrounds
- Repairing of roofs of houses, renovation of community buildings
- Animal husbandry and poultry farming

The sub-activities resulted from the enthusiasm of the GCs and the village community. Actvities such as sewing classes, provision of herbal porridge, environmental protection, etc., were initiated to supplement the major activities.

Although the allotted sum for each village was Rs. 10,000/- ($ 200) it was found that the contributions from the villagers to the activities, including their free services, were far above this amount, sometimes ten times more. This could be a result of the motivation provided by the GCs who were on the spot. Their presence helped the community to feel the genuineness of the activities and on their part they too committed their support in various ways such as unpaid labour, materials at low or no cost, and pooling of resources which were seemingly not available on earlier occasions. Further, the communities felt that they were participants in the development process. The people also felt that the resources they provided to this project would be directly enjoyed and shared by the community rather than going to a few individuals or to a contractor in the community. This had often been the case on earlier occasions.

8. Report on one centre - Badalkumbura

Badalkumbura is located 254 km from the capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo, and 40 km from Monaragala, the main town of this least developed District in the country. Climatically, Monagarala District falls into the dry zone of Sri Lanka. Badalkumbura is a junction town and has the services of a police station, post office, bank, secondary school, etc.

The GCs selected a part of the outskirts of the Badalkumbura township for their operations. It consisted of 72 households from different ethnic groups. The people had been residing in the area for a long time. They worked as labourers, engaged in small-scale sugar-cane cultivation or other small businesses and worked in the state and private sector.

There were three GCs attached to this centre. One was a girl, who stayed with a family, while the two boys found accommodation in a temple.

When the graduates arrived, a large meeting was organized with public servants, representatives of village-level organisations, priests of the local temple, representatives of local government and the school principal, who was the project coordinator. The meeting was followed later by the visits of the GCs to the community. The selection of the sub-areas in the village of Badalkumbura was the result of these visits and discussions the GCs had with various persons in the community. The visits helped the GCs to identify the leaders, both formal and informal. The formal leaders were those who held positions in government service and politics. The informal leaders were to a greater extent retired persons from the government service, entrepreneurs and successful farmers.

The major observations which the GCs gathered from the visits, discussions and field observations were as follows:

Social dynamics

- Absence of leadership qualities and lack of confidence amongst the non-elites in the community
- Loss of confidence of the people in most NGOs

- Presence of obstacles created by officials and politicians
- Identification of instances of corruption and injustices committed by both politicians and officials

Needs

- Acute water problem, with the result that water was being sold during the dry weather
- Lack of land for a few families
- Lack of toilets for over 75 per cent of the families
- Absence of pre-school facilities

On the basis of the above issues, the GCs developed a plan for the development of Badalkumbura in collaboration with the community. The major activities undertaken were as follows.

8.1. Opening of a pre-school

This was the most important felt need of the community and it formed the major activity of this group. As there was no building, a family donated a part of their house for this purpose free of charge. The teachers for the pre-school were selected from the village and they were provided with a short training course at the NIE.

The furniture was obtained with the assistance of the community. The GCs were able to locate some abandoned chairs and tables in the office of the village council.

Part of the expenses were met by the seed money provided to the project by the NIE, including the per diem expenses of the two teachers for the training and purchase of basic equipment for the pre-school. The remuneration of the teachers was to be paid by the parents of the children who attended the pre-school.

8.2. Construction of lavatories

The GCs had found that over 75 per cent of the people did not possess lavatories. However, the priority of the community was electricity! In such instances a rational judgement has to be made by the GCs and coordinators after consultation with the community. The issue was taken up by the GCs, and the village council agreed to provide the lavatories in a phased manner. Since the project could not meet all the needs it was decided that a few people were to be provided with lavatories from the seed money. The rest were to receive the necessary assistance from the local authorities.

8.3. Repair of a well

Like the above (8.2), this was another sub-activity planned by the graduates. They presented the issue to the *pradesiya saba* (village council) for immediate action. The council allocated the necessary funds, amounting to nearly $400, for this purpose. The cleaning was to be done with the use of unpaid labour from the community. The funds allocated were to be used to purchase materials such as cement, rubble, sand, etc.

8.4. Distribution of coconut seedlings

On their visits to the village, the GCs found that there were very few economically valuable trees in the gardens of the villages in Badalkumbura. The coconut is one which could be grown with ease in this climate although a little care is necessary during the dry period. People had enough space to accommodate a few trees in their gardens. The GCs had discussions with the relevant officials in the departments of agriculture and forestry and obtained the necessary coconut seedlings. Thus each household was provided with five plants.

8.5. Provision of doors and tiles

In the process of visiting the community the GCs had come across a widow with four children living in a small house without doors and windows. Since security was essential and the family was too poor to procure them, the GCs made arrangements with the police personnel to provide these items.

Similarly, the GCs provided 300 tiles to another deserving poor family in the village of Badalkumbura.

9. Significance of the methodology

The outcomes of the project reflect the significance of non-formal methodology as an approach in adult education. In general, courses on rural development or community development conducted by education institutes, including universities, adopt lecture methods and formal approaches. It may be that some exposure is provided but this is more of a decorative type and does not touch the depths of development issues at the grassroots.

In this project the whole learning process, other than the orientation workshop, was activity-based. GREAT gave the graduates the opportunity to learn from the people, or rather, to learn how to learn from the people and to develop activities which are congruent with the cultural ethos and needs of the people.

The main lessons to be drawn from the experiment indicate that:

- Development processes should be a component of all training programmes, both at universities and other institutions, in order to provide an understanding of the nature of endogenous development centred on man.

- Incorporation of adult learning methods should be part of the curriculum of all courses at universities.

- Non-formal approaches relating to the field should be adopted for an understanding of development issues.

10. Responses from stake-holders

The significance of the methodology can be seen in the impact of the project on the stake-holders, that is, the community, the GCs, the centre coordinators, the university and the NIE.

The reactions of the above groups may be presented briefly as follows.

10.1. Views of the community

People said that the GCs had achieved in a short period of time what even senior politicians in the locality had failed to bring about for years. This was seen in a number of activities, for example the opening of the pre-school in Badalkumbura. The community of Badalkumbura was of the view that unlike others the GCs had no hidden agendas, which was the major reason for the success of the activity.

The behaviour of the GCs won the accolade of the people and the priests of the villages. Prior to the visit of this group, the general impression of the average villager about graduates had been that they were more or less militant and their behavior would be culturally in conflict with the village environment. With these graduates the community found that they were ready to learn from them. For the first time they learnt to be partners in decision-making.

The discussions the GCs had with all the members of families helped them to understand their needs better. The people were glad to find that this group of young people, GCs, were different from most other agents of the state or of NGOs: they had not come to deliver sermons and directions to them but more to listen to their ideas.

The community members also understood that they had resources which are normally left unutilised, but which when discovered and put together can be important contributions.

The following extract from the report of a supervisor who attended a farewell function accorded to the GCs of Palugama village, located in the northwestern part of Sri Lanka, indicates the nature of the relationship developed between these groups:

> "At the final meeting before the graduates left, all the people expressed their sense of gratitude to the GCs. The villagers explicitly stated that the GCs
>
> "a. did not tell them what to do but instead made them understand the need;
>
> "b. were not on-lookers in whatever they undertook; they were participants and took part in the activities;
>
> "c. visited their houses and motivated them to work for the community;
>
> "d. had succeeded in bringing unity to the village, which did not exist before, and now they were convinced of the importance of working together;
>
> "e. did not exclude anyone in the village but sought the views of everyone;
>
> "f. braved the difficulties of an adverse climate and difficult living conditions; and

> "g. had brought new light to convince the people about their innate and latent capacities.
>
> "Nearly 10 persons spoke at this farewell meeting including three women. It was a touching and an emotional one and I saw tears in the eyes of the people. At the end of the meeting the GCs were presented with souvenirs which included goblets made by the people of Palugama which the GCs highly appreciated." (01.01.93)

10.2. Graduate Catalysts

The GCs realised that their knowledge and skills in understanding how to work under difficult situations had improved remarkably. Experiences gathered were far more realistic and grounded than what they had acquired from books and both university and secondary education. Throughout their life they had been subjected to conformity: rarely to be creative because of authoritarian teaching supported by formal evaluation. In this project the GCs had to find for themselves what the problems were and also to propose the possible solutions. In identifying solutions they had to listen to people, work with them, understand their norms and behaviour patterns and learn from them. Naturally this was a different form of learning from that of formal, structured patterns.

An example of the change can be seen from the letter of a participant graduate sent to the Director of the project. It says:

> "I am indebted to all that I learnt from this experience and as a result I am now greatly attached to the cause of development. All this while I was under the impression that passing examinations and obtaining good results are indicators of an educated person. After undergoing this field exposure now I am convinced that understanding the humanness of the people, showing kindness to the people, and the importance of fostering and protecting rural values should form the core of education. My mind has now been opened to greater vistas of life through this project." (Letter dated 12.08.94)

The university teachers also observed that these GCs, who had been shy during their university days and who rarely ventured even to speak out in their tutorial classes were now bold and confident in meeting and discussing developmental issues with anyone.

The GCs developed the ability to organise meetings, conduct interviews, etc. Further, they also gained the ability to live and work under most difficult and trying conditions. This relates to living conditions as well as food habits because the centres selected were in difficult areas of the country.

Before entering a village, the GCs were not aware of the services that were available for development, but once they started work and got involved with the realities they understood not only the service connections but also the bottlenecks. Some of the problems were not necessarily with the state officials but were the result of a lack of awareness among the people of how and where to apply for what.

The GCs developed the capacity to work within a given time framework and to design projects that took into consideration limitations in resources and time. Ability to mobilise local resources to the maximum was another skill that the GCs developed through this project.

Another important lesson they gathered was that in development activities there cannot be total success. Failures and disappointments were part of the process. The diary entry of a GC dated 12.04.93 indicates the truth of that statement: "only 12 families were represented at the meeting held to discuss the construction of the community centre. But we decided to pursue this activity a little further" (diary of H.M.Loku Banda). At first, this was very discouraging because of the poor response from the village. However at the end of the project period the GCs were able to complete the construction (in Katudeniya, District of Matale, Central Province).

The GCs were keen to follow up similar activities when they were to be given teaching appointments at a later stage in schools. This is an indication of the quality of the change of attitude of these graduates, and of the motivation and the confidence the GCs had developed during the project.

Gender was not an issue at all for the villagers. In some centres there were only women, and the villagers accepted their leadership role. Women GCs were apparently not at all conscious of this either, and did not feel uneasy or face any problems. Any constraints that the women encountered would have been faced by males and were not gender-specific.

10.3. Centre coordinators

The third category of learners was the centre coordinators, i.e., the principals of schools and others. This was the first time in the history of the Ministry of Education that school principals were involved directly in a development programme. For them, adult education and non-formal systems had been part of the theoretical information they had acquired in their training. For the first time, a practical programme was opened up before them.

As coordinators of the GREAT project, the principals were responsible for all financial matters related to the project such as monthly payments to the graduates, seed money for the project, etc.

10.4. University personnel

The experience indicates that this type of exposure helped to reveal the strengths and inner capacities of the young people as this project was not examination-oriented. The university teachers realised that this form of exposure should be provided to all graduates whenever possible.

11. Summary: Lessons learnt by the graduates

The lessons which graduates of the programme said they had learnt in relation to development and working with the community can be summarised as follows:

About the community

- The importance of identifying people's different skills and competencies

- The need to pay attention to the issues considered vital by the people but side-tracked and even ignored by village-level officials
- The need to identify the issues and needs of the community through understanding their attitudes and their culture
- An awareness of the significance and bearing of various social structures in the community in relation to development activities
- A capacity to improve the self-confidence of the community
- A knowledge of the presence of persons with varied opinions and ideas in the community, and of how to use such persons in varied development activities

About the process of initiating development programmes:

- The importance of knowing the social and economic structures of the village in depth
- The significance of discussing the strategies identified for development with the people
- The importance of knowing the good faith of the NGOs working at the village level
- The importance of an awareness of resources available in the community and how to bring them together
- The capacity to provide leadership to the community
- The skill of bringing about cooperation among the community for development activities
- The importance of liason between members of the community and the officials in various departments and institutions, and of providing opportunities for the people to meet those officials

About education:

- The importance of listening to people in development
- The importance of the participatory process and of methods of making development stay with the people
- The development of methods of understanding how to live with the people and to decipher their nuances
- Methods of winning the confidence of the people

12. Planning for adoption and consequences for development policy in Sri Lanka

The NFE department of the NIE was responsible for disseminating the results of the NFE project to the Ministry of Education. It should be stated that most educationists in Sri Lanka are of the opinion that NFE can be used mostly for literacy or the development of technical skills, and is for marginalised groups or relatively uneducated groups. The use of NFE methodology in universities had never been thought of in Sri Lanka. In fact, the Ministry of Education questioned the rationale for designing a NFE project for university graduates. Hence there was tremendous pressure on the NFE department to develop this to a successful end, and the experiences gathered in the process are considered to be of great importance. The project undoubtedly helped to add new dimensions to adult and non-formal education in Sri

Lanka and proved beyond doubt the effectiveness of NFE as a methodology for all adults at all levels of maturity and learning.

The GREAT project was an innovation that used new approaches as well as existing structures within the system. It was entirely local with respect to needs, resources, linkages and sustainability. It was only the idea that came from outside the community, and that too was conceived within Sri Lanka.

As the project is in its second phase, the interim findings were presented to the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka (NEC), which oversees educational development — both at school and tertiary level. The NEC has already taken steps to use the experiences and the methodology of GREAT to make it part of national policy. The implementation of the programme may take place later.

13. Recommendations for generalising the programme

First of all, it would be appropriate to set up an advisory group (with people from the universities, the NIE, relevant ministries, provincial councils and NGOs). Such an organisation at a national level would formalise the process.

It is recommended that all those who graduate from the universities, irrespective of discipline, should undergo a field training programme of this nature, before seeking employment in the state sector. The length of time spent could be suitably adjusted.

Those who enter university could also undergo this exposure before enrolment. Presently, the machinery takes two to three years to admit qualified students to a university. During this period the undergraduates could be provided with the exposure. Exposing undergraduates to field training of this nature would have a strong effect on the teaching-learning methodologies of the universities. It would even entail changes in the curriculum. As far as the duration of the field work is concerned, the graduates from the first two phases of the project recommend that it be extended to 12 months.

Development links with social organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, should be another aspect that could be brought in to facilitate the process.[1] These institutions could use the students in programmes related to their field of activity. This would enable a decentralisation process whereby a large number of institutions would meet the basic needs of the programme.

Another suggestion is that both schools and universities could take over the development of a few villages in the vicinity as part of educational development. The objective would be to make the school or university a hub for development work, especially in relation to agricultural activities and the developoment of young people's entrepreneurial capacities.

---

[1] The NGOs that are referred to here are the national-level organisations which should take this up as a matter of policy. The assistance already provided by some of the NGOs to the project is at micro level and is not a result of a national NGO policy.

14. The current situation

The experiences of this project have been made use of by the government to train graduates from all universities in Sri Lanka. This training programme, referred to as professional development of graduates, is implemented by the Post-Graduate Institute of Management of the University of Jayawardhanapura, in collaboration with the Ministry of Plan and Plan Implementation. The programme is on a larger scale, catering for all unemployed graduates in Sri Lanka.

The University of Colombo has already commenced a training programme on the professional development of graduates in the country. In the planning of this project the experiences of GREAT were made use of, and the Director of the NFE Department of the NIE was co-opted on to the planning committee.

In addition, the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka, the highest educational body that advises the government, has taken up this project as being of importance in the human resource development of graduates.

15. Conclusions

A number of principles can be derived from this innovation that could be of use in both adult and development education.

As far as university training for development workers is concerned, the GREAT experiment has revealed the value of adult learning processes and methodologies which could be provided effectively and economically through NFE. GREAT has highlighted a methodology for training development workers who are ready to learn from the people and who are able to plan from the bottom up, following the people's priorities.

At the level of the communities involved, the project has clearly demonstrated the success of local development projects based on the use of the people's own resources and those available through local state institutions and NGOs. In all the project centres, the resources mobilised by the GCs, both material and human, invariably amounted to more than thrice the value contributed by donors. Besides, the project stressed the value of indigenous technical knowledge if development has to stay with the people.

Furthermore, the importance of adopting the "harmony model" as against the "conflict model" in development was clearly tested in this project. It was found that the harmony approach brings the whole community together. The GREAT project made use of all groups of people. In a conflict model, invariably only one type of group is approached, leaving out the rest of the community. Under such circumstances only that part of the community which is involved becomes interested in the activity.

The basic premise of the GREAT project is that it is endogenous. It is based on the potential resources of the community and the actual circumstances and realities of the environment.

QUESTION DE COMPÉTENCES
THE COMPETENCE ISSUE: A TOOL FOR WOMEN

Working Together on Links between Past and Future

Rachel Bélisle

Training Tools Director, *Question de compétences*
Québec/Canada

In conjunction with:
Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICÉA)
Relais-femmes
Centre d'orientation et de formation pour les femmes
en recherche d'emploi (COFFRE)

And many women who have played an active part in this project

English translation: Scott Eavenson and Andrea Neuhofer

Acknowledgements

Many people helped to make this case study possible. I thank France Lauzon, Francine Gravel, Ginette Dussault, Ginette Fournier, Manon Raymond, Marthe Gosselin, and Pauline Carrière, all participants in *Question de compétences* workshops between 1991 and 1993. I also thank Denise Alary (Form-O-Sud, Longueuil), Dominique Geffroy (Partance, Drummondville), Guylaine Garant (Transition'Elle, Saint-Romuald), Marie-Andrée Daigneault (Passage Yamaska, Cowansville), Rosie Lemieux (COFFRE, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu), Ginette Busque, Fernande Roy, Martine Roy, Martine Groulx, Esther Desilets, Ginette Thériault, Hélène Paré, Hélène Bohémier, Suzanne Bélanger, Diane Laberge, Lucie Bélanger, and Madeleine Blais, as well as Bernard Vallée.

1. Introduction

At the very end of 1989, the kit entitled *Question de compétences: un outil au service des femmes* (The Competence Issue: A Tool for Women) was published in Quebec, Canada, by three organizations: the Centre d'orientation et de formation pour les femmes en recherche d'emploi (Guidance and Training Centre for Women in Search of Jobs, COFFRE), Relais-femmes, and the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICÉA). *Question de compétences* (QC) is intended to assist women in recognizing generic skills[1] that have been developed in family and community life and that are required on the Quebec job market.

The first organization to identify the need for such a tool was COFFRE. This non-academic training centre in the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu region offers a vocational guidance program with practical training in business environments.

Relais-femmes and the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes, are national associations comprising several organizations that carry out work related to the status of women and adult education, respectively. A number of these organizations shared the need that COFFRE had identified.

Following the publication of *Question de compétences* in late 1989, the three publishing organizations conducted activities to promote the kit's dissemination. During the same period, projects directly related to QC were started. All those activities are included in the present description of the QC project.

In Section 2, I have briefly described the kit and the process involved with *Question de compétences*. Section 3 examines the repercussions that QC has had on the women and organizations that have used it. I have summarized the results of the kit's dissemination, reported on the changes prompted by use of the process or by participation in the production of the kit, and briefly recapitulated the QC characteristics that seem to be the most innovative when users work with it. In Section 4, I have used large brush strokes to portray the social and collective situation in Quebec, which now appears to be a determining factor in the QC project. Finally, I have described the main activities that led to the creation of QC and of tools derived from it, and I have presented elements that have either promoted or restricted innovation with respect to the project.

2. The kit and process of *Question de compétences*

The QC kit consists of original educational materials providing a detailed description of a group process that helps women to recognize generic skills[2] that they have succeeded in

---

1 Translation note: There has been much debate concerning the use of the term "competences" in both its French and English forms. In order to avoid misunderstandings, we have resorted to the word "competences" as the translation of "compétences", which has a more general meaning in this paper. The expression "generic skills" is the translation of the French term "compétences génériques."

2 QC defines "generic skills" as "abilities that are part of an individual's personality and are useful in all walks of life. They are skills that can be developed in a specific living or working environment and transferred or used in another living or working environment." For example, a sense of organization, initiative, and persistence are generic skills. For further details, see

developing through work in the home, family, or community and for which there is a demand on the labour market.

2.1. The women targeted by QC

QC educational materials are intended for those training organizations and teams that offer training programs to women who are underprivileged in terms of access to the job market. The materials were prepared in order to fill a gap in the area of tools for recognizing the competences of women who have had few years of schooling, want to find a job, have no diploma to highlight their abilities, have little or no job experience, and who do have a good level of experience in home, family, or community work.

2.2. The organizations and programs targeted by QC

The QC process was designed to be used in the framework of programs allowing for more complete integration into the labour market. Such programs are directly or otherwise tied to government labour adjustment and training policies.

When QC was published, some 60 organizations in Quebec were offering vocational guidance sessions for women without a secondary diploma,[3] the majority of them in the non-formal sector.

The organizations targeted by QC must be able to rely on trainers who are experienced in working with women, planning, and facilitating training sessions. QC is not a process that can be taught, but rather one that is facilitated and that provides participants with plenty of room for free expression.

The QC process can also be adjusted and integrated into workshops offered by independent groups, such as women's centres.

2.3. Goals and objectives made possible by QC

QC was produced for the purpose of "increasing women's chances of finding gainful employment". QC can also be used for other purposes, such as developing self-confidence in women who would like to play a more active role in their community. More specifically, the objectives of QC are to help women to value work in the home and as volunteers and to recognize their own generic skills, which are in demand on the job market and have been developed through significant experience.

---

section 3.6.2.

[3] Secondary diplomas are awarded on completion of 12 years of studies. In Quebec, secondary studies have gradually become the equivalent of basic education. Today, people without a secondary diploma are increasingly excluded from the job market, even from non-specialized employment. Categorization into "formal", "non-formal" or "informal" has become increasingly meaningless in Quebec. Most facilitators who use QC come from the non-formal sector, but some teachers in the formal sector also use QC.

2.4. *The way the QC process unfolds*

The QC process is composed of a series of 12 workshops that last a total of approximately 18 hours. The 12 are divided into three units. The first unit is intended to provide women with an opportunity to value the experience that they have gained through work in the home and in other unpaid activities. The second unit is designed in such a way that women can recognize those strong generic skills that are potentially transferable to a paid job. The third unit is aimed at helping participants to feel sure that their strongest generic skills can be useful in a job context and to speak with conviction. Trainers may use the workshops in a continuous fashion or choose to spread them out over the course of their program.

2.5. *The QC kit*

The QC kit was designed in a way that makes it easy to use. We wanted trainers experienced in facilitating work with women's groups to become rapidly familiar with its training content and work methodology.

The QC materials are composed of seven items, which are sold with a box for easy storage:

- a manual for the trainers
- a video, which is used in three workshops and contains 13 short stories illustrating generic skills, as well as a brief description of 12 non-specialized jobs[4] and a simulated job interview
- a document that accompanies the video and helps the trainers to "read" and use it
- a set of 12 documents to be photocopied and handed out to participants
- a series of cards with role-playing situations
- folders that the participants may use to keep their QC photocopies together
- stickers that make it easy to identify different materials

2.6. *Dissemination of QC*

COFFRE, Relais-femmes, and the ICÉA chose to publish the QC material jointly and to create a partnership to manage the funds generated by its sale. To do so they formed the Comité de développement de *Question de compétences* (CDQC).

The QC kit sells for CAN$ 70 to anyone who requests it. There is no system for accrediting or evaluating the trainers who want to use QC, and the publishing organizations have no control over its use. In the manual, trainers will find a set of criteria enabling them to judge whether or not they are capable of using QC efficiently. Trianing for trainers is available on request.

The publishers consider that the individuals or organizations purchasing QC may use it as they see fit, provided that they respect basic rules of ethics concerning bibliographical references and copyrights.

---

[4] Here the term "non-specialized jobs" means any kind of employment that is not regulated and for which no specific diploma is required.

2.7. Other members of the QC family

Two complementary projects aimed at broadening QC dissemination have been carried out since 1990. In 1991, Relais-femmes responded to requests from some of its member groups by producing a manual (Bélisle, 1991) intended for women's groups that did not have labour market integration programs.

Shortly after that, Relais-femmes conducted exploratory research on whether or not it was relevant to adapt QC for immigrant women in Quebec. This research was carried out in collaboration with the Collectif de femmes immigrantes (CFI, Immigrant Women's Collective).

In 1993 the ICÉA obtained the necessary funding for a project to produce and publish a second-generation kit for the recognition of generic skills of men and women who have little or no proficiency with written language. This kit, entitled *Nos compétences fortes* (NCF), was published in the fall of 1995.

The ICÉA and COFFRE intend to create a tool for workers who are victims of industrial restructuring. However, this project has not entered the implementation phase.

3. The use and utility of *Question de compétences*

In 1994, I conducted a brief survey among 20 organizations in order to know whether and how the people who had purchased QC were actually using it, and to find out what QC had changed in the lives of the organizations and trainers who were using it in the manner suggested by the publication. Thirdly, I met with some of the women who had taken part in the QC training process.

3.1. Use of QC by the organizations that purchased it

According to the publishers' data on orders, nearly 250 QC kits were sold between 1990 and 1994. The survey told us that 65% of the 20 organizations questioned make partial or total use of the tool in their regular programs. Fifteen percent had made partial or total use of the QC process in the past, though they were no longer using it at the time of the survey. Ten percent had used it as reference material, and another 10% have never used it.

The survey showed that the clientele of many organizations is no longer exactly the same as when the QC targets were originally defined. Women's life and work experiences are now more heterogeneous, the average age of participants is lower and, in some groups, women have more schooling than they did previously. In other groups there are women who, though they have had many years of experience with paid jobs, have recently become victims of factory shut-downs. Furthermore, more immigrant women are participating in the training sessions.

3.2. QC's impact on the lives of participants

More than 100 women took part in developing the QC process prior to its publication. It is estimated that since then over 10,000 Quebec women have benefited from the process.

Short-term learning is quickly integrated into the other program activities, and some women also make use of it outside the program. For example, recognition of their generic

skills helps many women to choose a clearer direction or undertake significant changes in their lives. The self-confidence developed thanks to the QC workshops facilitates exchange with peers or trainers, as well as the ability to make decisions and act on them. Outside the program, QC workshops have an influence on relations with people around the participants, particularly when it comes to dealing with how household tasks will be shared or identifying the strengths of family members.

In the medium term, learning gained from QC workshops enables women to communicate more easily with employers (curricula vitae, telephone conversations, job interviews) or with the school system (registration, prior learning assessment). QC allows women to have more confidence in themselves and their potential, in addition to a wider vocabulary with which to communicate and convince.

Some of the participants with whom I met[5] have a clear memory of certain QC workshops. They consider what they learned invaluable because it changed their self-image and their relations with people around them (their family, community, educational or work environment).

Interviews with seven participants who had experienced QC workshops one to three years earlier allowed me to arrive at several conclusions and ideas for further discussion on the "sustainability" of what is learned during the QC workshops:

- All women are very good at talking about themselves, and they do it in an interesting and, very often, convincing manner.

- The participants' tolerance with regard to other people was greater than it had been previously; in their relations with people around them (their children, colleagues, spouse) some women were trying to discover strengths, instead of concentrating on weaknesses.

- None of the women I met could stand any more talk about how a woman supposedly does nothing when she stays at home.

- However, for many of them the term "work in the home" continues to have the spontaneous connotation of cooking and cleaning.[6] For some of them, it meant periods in their lives when they "stayed" at home, but it did not imply family and home activities in general. The development of their generic skills therefore took place at those periods of time.

---

[5] These were the women at Partance. For several days they had taken part in a Partance program for women who were not sure of their plans for the future. After this first session, those who want to enter the job market may register for another program that has been designed for women who want to look for a job.

[6] This indicates how, at least in French, the above expression ("travail au foyer") creates serious confusion. It is an ambiguous term when referring to family, domestic, and personal activities because several of these activities take place outside the home. In the other projects dealing with QC, both "work in the home" and "voluntary work" were replaced by more appropriate terms.

- Different values were attributed to gainful employment and work in the home. Most women derived greater personal satisfaction from their public lives (employment, studies, social commitments). Nevertheless, some think that their relationships with their children were another important source of self-actualization.

- The expression "generic skills" did not belong to the everyday vocabulary of the women I met. Still, the participants in the Partance program[7] had appropriated the concept (personality traits that develop and are useful, as well as transferable) to a greater extent than other women.

3.3. QC's impact on the lives of trainers

Both participants and trainers were taken into consideration when the QC kit was designed. Trainers play a facilitating role, and they are significantly influential in colouring the QC process. They transmit their knowledge and they have to decode the participants' experiences and recognize their significant knowledge. They must establish links between QC workshop discussions and the other program activities.

Facilitators must be good at listening not only to spoken words, but also to those that come from the heart, from looks, and from vibrations.[8] The more some facilitators work with the QC, the further they can go in non-formal recognition, a process that requires humility, sensitivity, and energy. The QC training manual provides material for learning prior to use. There are also ample opportunities for learning throughout the QC process.

When referring to the changes that QC has given rise to in their personal and professional lives, trainers have mentioned that, in the first place, they feel much better equipped to help women who have little job experience but want to become engaged in gainful employment. The following are some of the conclusions and ideas for additional discussion taken from remarks by trainers concerning the impact of QC on their own lives:

- They are now more familiar with the realities of women in their regions.

- They have a better knowledge of their own generic skills.

- They more frequently remember to exploit their personal strengths; they no longer demand a "superwoman" performance of themselves.

- Training teams that use QC distribute workloads by emphasizing the strengths of each trainer rather than by using any other kind of work allocation.

---

[7] Of all the trainers with whom I had discussions, the one at Partance is without doubt the most "sold" on the concept of generic skills. She considers it to be essential in linking heterogeneous environments. Both her personal convictions and the fact that Partance uses QC in a short, concentrated program may explain the higher level of conceptual appropriation shown by this organization's participants.

[8] I was told that the trainers who most enjoy working with QC are those for whom creativity is important.

- They are more tolerant in their relationships with people and try to focus on their strengths, instead of their weaknesses or shortcomings.

- They no longer carry out their household and family activities in exactly the same way as before.

3.4. QC's impact on the lives of the toolmakers

Though the organizations hired the "toolmakers" who worked directly on the production of QC, on the basis of their past records, the women concerned learned much from doing the work. For example, our work with QC enabled some of us to discover that it was difficult to value our personal and professional strengths when we had to face people whose experiences or world views were different from our own. Like many other people who have non-standardized unregulated occupations, we hoped that other people would recognize the impact of our production work without our having to always explain it. The links established between our attitudes and those of many other women and underprivileged people have helped us to change our recognition strategies.

3.5. Innovation in the QC family

In daily practice, QC and NCF educational materials are unquestionably different from other existing materials. They make it possible to find solutions or ideas for finding solutions to problems that training organizations had not previously been able to solve. One of the material's original highlights is its success in combining thinking and practices from informal, non-formal and formal adult education, from the feminist movement and from the publishing sector. Furthermore, the QC family has led people to explore certain niches to which research, especially on the university level, had previously paid little attention. Development of the QC family is based on independent and non-formal research.

For the purpose of the present article, I have identified the following five aspects of the QC approach,[9] which, in practice, are particularly innovative and yield significant results:

1. Building on competences developed through *women's traditional unpaid labour* so as to help them to find gainful employment;
2. The concept of *generic skills* as a connecting theme that links people's life experiences;
3. The relevance of *recognition* by both self and others;
4. An approach based on the *strengths* of the participants, trainers, and organizations;
5. The development of *materials for adults who are not fluent in the language*.

---

[9] Though the five innovative aspects identified in the present document are part of the NCF material (published in the fall of 1995), it cannot be concluded, at least for the time being, that the results obtained with the clienteles targeted by NCF are the same as for those targeted by QC.

3.5.1. Building on competences developed through women's traditional unpaid labour so as to help them to find gainful employment

In QC, work at home is defined as "all activities whose objective is to respond to people's fundamental needs: food, physical comfort, rest, safety, a feeling of belonging, etc."[10]

An approach that excludes the division of labour on the basis of sex has been introduced. Therefore, mechanical maintenance work exists alongside knitting, repairing small machines, and decorating the house. This same approach will be used when dealing with the job market.

The facilitators who are very pleased with the workshops related to work at home think them relevant for the participants, who gain more confidence in themselves and in their stock of experiences. Workshop discussions on responsibilities in the family and at home give the women a chance to compare personal values relating to housework, child care, support for their spouses, etc. Some women discover that others have very different attitudes on these matters. This helps those who carry out their work in the family and at home according to rules that do not suit them to question those rules by drawing on the alternatives put forward in other women's experiences.

But some trainers say that competition for jobs is currently so fierce that most employers will consider experience in the home to be useless, no matter how convinced women may be. Other trainers are more subtle, recommending to participants that they take a strategic approach to interviews and mention only paid jobs, if they have had any, because employers are more inclined to recognize experience derived from gainful employment. The question of choosing examples for job interviews is included in the last workshops of the QC process.

The above remarks have made us understand the need to readapt our materials so as to provide better theoretical arguments that experience gained by women (and men) in family and household work does provide a basis on which to upgrade skills and competences, an aspect which has not yet been developed enough in QC, and the need to work on employers' awareness.

3.5.2. Generic skills as a connecting theme

In 1988 in Quebec, the concept of generic skills was not being used in the practical recognition materials or processes that were available to people with little schooling. In QC, generic skills are defined as:

> "abilities that belong to an individual's personality and that are useful in all walks of life. They are skills that can be developed in a specific living or working environment and transferred to or used in a different living or working environment."

For the purpose of easier comprehension, the concept is often presented in contrast with that of "specific skills":

> " used to designate skills that have been developed in the framework of a particular task: for example, the ability to iron or make a year's supply of preserves."[11]

---

[10] From the glossary of the self-training manual: *Lexique, Cahier d'auto-formation*, p. 191.

[11] QC training manual, p. 11.

In QC, emphasis is placed on the fact that *strong* generic skills are among each woman's characteristic *personality* traits and that these strong skills can be *transferred*. This is a simplification that encourages positive assessment and recognition of past experience. Of course, all generic skills, regardless of their strength, are transferable.

Following long discussions with their partners, COFFRE, Relais-femmes, and the ICÉA chose thirteen generic skills: a sense of responsibility; a sense of doing a job correctly; a sense of interpersonal relationships; a sense of organization; the ability to work with a team; creativity; perseverance; initiative; self-confidence; adaptability; leadership; the ability to do repetitive work; and the ability to work under pressure.

The concept of generic skills gives women a special capacity to value their experiences with terms that are used and respected on the job market. It allows them to see that several of their skills were developed in the context of family, home, or community responsibilities. According to one facilitator, "the activities dealing with generic skills help us to focus attention on the lives of women and help the group to read an extensive range of everyday experiences and to work together on the links between the past and the future and between family activities and the job market."

In 1994, the participants in job-entry programs had more experience in gainful employment than those who had taken part in similar programs in the 1980s. However, jobs are currently very unstable and do not last long. Moreover, the women from the social classes with which the QC process is involved continue to be active in their families and homes, even when they are employed. Recognition of generic skills enables them to see a common thread in all their heterogeneous experiences; it also facilitates career choices and allows them to observe their own personal mechanisms for adapting and reacting to changes in their lives.[12]

3.5.3. Recognition by both self and others

Another original aspect of QC is the recognition process that it recommends for women. QC combines activities related to both recognition and self-recognition via a better understanding of oneself and others. Self-recognition leads to more power over one's own life and contributes to autonomy.[13]

The QC recognition process is different from the formal systems of prior learning assessment, developed for school environments in the 1980s, and from the vocational qualifications certification process established by the vocational training organizations. QC includes no formal accreditation, approval, or standardized assessment by experts or even trainers. Instead, the QC process allows women to develop know-how during the workshops. This "how-to-recognize" process asks each woman to present *at least* two examples to convince the group that she actually possesses a generic skill. Without these examples, she cannot claim that she has recognized her skill.

---

12 This last use of the concept of generic skills and of the QC workshops is still in a preliminary stage and is not yet very widespread. It is just one of many doors that QC allows trainers and participants to open.

13 In Quebec, the quest for and conquest of women's autonomy has been part of all feminist struggles, regardless of their political tendencies. Perhaps this concept is the true counterpart of what our English-speaking sisters refer to by way of the term "empowerment."

3.5.4. An approach based on the strengths of the participants, trainers, and organizations

The QC and NCF processes emphasize the strengths of the people who are making an effort to recognize their own generic skills so as to help them to carry out their plans for the future. This approach relies in effect on what adults already possess in the form of experience and skills. This makes QC considerably different from assessment tools used to identity training gaps that should be filled and training activities focused on learning content that adults do not possess.

QC and NCF also differ from standardizing educational processes, whose underlying assumptions are that basis skills should (and can) be the same for all adults[14] and that each person in a group should aim at acquiring the same knowledge as the other members of the group, despite the fact that all people have different pasts, present realities, and future plans. For the numerous women, wives, and mothers of whom perfection has been expected in all of life's facets, QC represents a precious source of relief because they understand that they do not have to be excellent at everything.

3.5.5. Developing materials for adults who are not fluent in the language

"The most important thing for me," said one COFFRE participant, "was to discover all those words that enabled me to speak about my personal experience, to make my life valuable and meaningful."

Speaking about oneself is increasingly essential in finding a job or an on-the-job training project. Gone are the days when a potential employee could just show up at the factory and find work. Even non-specialized jobs now require the ability to express ideas and pass on useful information. QC offers the women the opportunity to discover and appropriate new vocabulary. In this way, QC contributes to upgrading literacy skills. Women who normally use vernacular forms of speech are able to acquire the kind of vocabulary that will help them to make contact with employers or people in an academic environment: i.e., people from a different social milieu.

The use of video is another innovative characteristic of QC. The purpose of the video presentation is not to transmit knowledge by oral means, but instead to "awaken" the participants' already existing knowledge and, from there, to go on to abstraction.

It is difficult to explain concepts such as generic skills in simple words and sentences. The left side of facilitators' brains[15] cannot lie idle! The appropriate use of video drama makes it possible to enter a different world in terms of the perception of content: a world where emotions and images supplant words and logic. Video becomes an invaluable tool in helping women with little schooling to become familiar with concepts that are useful in recognizing

---

[14] Particularly in the NCF project, we have tied together thinking on basic skills (especially reading and writing) and generic skills.

[15] In Quebec, practitioners in the field of education are increasingly familiar with basic concepts concerning the way the brain functions in learning situations; they are also more and more aware of the different roles that scientists associate with the left (e.g., word management and reasoning) and right (e.g., images and art) sides of the brain. These discoveries contribute to the debate on the differences between women's and men's brain structures. Of course, they should be used with an open mind, caution, and a sense of humour!

their own personal strengths. As these concepts are integrated into situations that are tangible and meaningful for the participants, it is much easier to discuss them after the presentation.

QC's video stories about Céline and Carole and the NCF version, with Gaston, Conradine, and others, enable the group to establish common experiential reference points, and helps them to remember the meaning attributed to a generic skill.[16]

4. Social situations at the origin of QC

The *Question de compétences* kit was published in Quebec (Canada) at the end of 1989. A number of changing realities and intellectual trends affecting Quebec Francophone society at the time influenced the development of the kit. In the following, I sketch a broad portrait of this context.

4.1. The social, economic, and cultural context

Starting in the 1960s, Quebec Francophone society and family life began to undergo profound changes. Quebec started to break its traditionally deep ties with the Catholic Church, increasingly affirming the secularity of its government and civil institutions. Generations of Québécois openly began to contest religious authority, which was particularly repressive toward women.

In the '70s, public schools became coeducational. Trades and professions slowly began to rid themselves of their gender-related connotations. In the home, women timidly began to take on more "masculine" tasks, while men began to move into areas traditionally reserved for women.

In families, the use of birth control increased at a breathtaking rate. At the same time, the incidence of separation among couples was rising, the number of couples living together outside marriage was spreading, and people began to change their perception of homosexuality as a disease.

The '70s saw increasing numbers of Quebec women entering the labor market. Many mothers went back to school to specialize. In several circles, a reversal of an earlier situation could be observed: whereas a mere ten years earlier, women with a job were subject to social disapproval, now it was women staying at home who were held in low esteem.

Finding a job in the short term was particularly important for single mothers. Often, these mothers in their thirties, forties, or fifties did not have sufficient job experience in the eyes of employers. Many of them joined the ever-expanding ranks of poor families who survive on welfare benefits, monthly allowances paid by the State according to a series of criteria, including a number of checks.

The economic crisis of the 1980s did nothing at all to improve the situation. The unemployment rate and poverty were on the rise, and women were among the hardest hit. Many women took on several small jobs and later went through periods of unemployment. Some employers took a negative view of the professional instability of these women. They had

---

[16] Precisely because of video's strong impact on the participants, the script, acting, and credibility of the shooting location are all crucially important. I dream of the day when we will have budgets comparable to those allocated to television productions.

difficulty understanding vocational paths so far removed from their own or from those of their spouses.

This is the context that led to the emergence in Quebec of labor market integration organizations for women. These are service groups that offer training and support activities to women in search of a job.

COFFRE is one of these organizations. Created in 1982 as an extension of the services of the Canadian Employment Centre (a government organization that mainly offers job placement services) in the region of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, COFFRE made its services accessible throughout the region to all women who were disadvantaged in terms of access to jobs, making service to single mothers its top priority.

4.2. The need for practical tools

About three years after starting its activities, the COFFRE team felt an increasingly urgent need to develop educational materials that would assist participants in systematically assessing the experience and skills developed through years of taking care of their families and home responsibilities. Existing materials and methods in this area were unsatisfactory, since they only addressed gainful employment and overlooked the extent and significance of work in the home, the community or the underground economy.

Adult prior learning assessment methods developed in the '80s were useful for women returning to school, but not for those who hoped to find a job quickly. Moreover, they proved to be fairly inaccessible to women with low self-esteem, who were uncomfortable with abstraction and writing and did not have a high school diploma. These were precisely the women who made up the majority of the clientele of organizations such as COFFRE.

From this context emerged the idea of developing a tool that would assist trainers in establishing a relationship between the prior learning of their clients and the needs of employers in the region. COFFRE, which did not have the human or financial resources for this type of work, turned to the ICÉA and Relais-femmes for help.

The ICÉA is an organization providing research and partnership in the field of adult education. Members of the ICÉA include trade unions, community groups, women's groups, public education institutions, and NGOs active in international cooperation.

Relais-femmes is a national organization, created in 1980 to provide training and research support to its close to thirty member groups, including provincial associations, federations, coalitions, training organizations, and independent women's groups. Relais-femmes has acquired expertise in action research and works with both its member groups and the university milieu.

The project took place in the course of 1986 and concluded with the publication of a research report.[17] This research experience, which the COFFRE team found disappointing because it did not provide practical facilitating tools, proved to be useful later in clearly defining the needs of actual training organizations and in ensuring that those needs were addressed.

---

[17] La reconnaissance des acquis des femmes sur le marché du travail rémunéré (Recognition of women's skills on the gainful employment market). Monique Vallée, 1986.

5. Main Activities of the QC Family

In order to give readers a better idea of the innovation process that has been and continues to be a part of QC and its small family (i.e., its direct descendants), I have focused on those activities that contributed the most to the development of the innovative aspects of QC.

5.1. Setting up the project

A few months after the publication of the research report, COFFRE again proposed joining forces with Relais-femmes and the ICÉA in a new attempt to develop a practical tool facilitating recognition of the skills of its clientele.

> "The project entitled 'Développement d'un outil pour l'évaluation des compétences au service des femmes défavorisées' (Development of a Tool for Evaluating the Competences of Underprivileged Women) consists of designing, producing, and testing a tool intended for actors in the institutional and independent networks whose work is devoted to women wishing to re-enter the job market, particularly those without a secondary school diploma and with limited experience on the job market. The tool should allow women in this target group to identify the competences and abilities acquired at home and in voluntary work and to put those competences to use in looking for employment."[18]

A project management committee was formed and a full-time researcher was hired for two years to design and produce the kit. She cooperated with the management committee members in defining the direction of the work. An advisory committee, composed of 16 members representing organizations from various sectors, was set up in 1988. Among those represented, out-of-school education organizations (i.e. feminist, trade union and vocational training agencies) were in the majority. The formal education system and government departments were also represented.

5.2. Evolution of the project under NLMIP funding

Like many creative projects, this one centred on three aspects: *research, production and dissemination*. These three periods of significant development were preceded by specific obstacles, which had to be overcome.

SPRING 1988: The field of study was narrowed: it was established that recognition would apply to generic skills, and the idea of developing an evaluation tool was completely abandoned.

---

[18] After numerous discussions it received a grant from the National Labour Market Innovations Program (NLMIP) of the Federal Ministry of Employment and Immigration and obtained funding from the Quebec Ministry of Labour and Income Security for part of the exploratory research.

Within the first weeks of the project, the project team learned that the Commission de formation professionnelle (Vocational Training Commission, CFP) in the Quebec City region, had initiated a major project on the recognition of vocational competences (competences that are useful in a job situation), including competences developed in the home and in voluntary work.[19] A pilot project with a group of single mothers revealed the existence of a number of similarities in goals. The immediate fear was that of overlap.

The CFP was strongly inspired by the evaluation and recognition model developed by the U.S. organization, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and it adopted a formal recognition approach. Its evaluation tools did not seem to correspond to the realities of the organizations targeted by the COFFRE-ICÉA-Relais-femmes project. Since one already existed in the CFP project, the idea of suggesting an evaluation tool was abandoned. The focus was placed on a training process, with a self-assessment aspect, which would help women to recognize their own generic skills.

The early research confirmed that there was a demand for generic skills on the labour market. To fill non-specialized jobs, several employers were looking for personnel having this type of competences, and they offered specific training in the tasks to be accomplished.

The research carried out by the QC producers confirmed that work at home allows women to develop numerous competences. The project decided to use the same vocabulary as the CFP in order to promote dialogue among the different sectors. However, they did not feel that they had to limit themselves to the skills defined by the CFP. The researcher solicited the help of experienced collaborators in the preparation of measurement instruments. The kit was produced in summer 1988.

FALL 1988: Pre-test results for the experimental version of the kit

Face-to-face with reality, the participants and facilitators who tested the preliminary version of the kit were categorical: in its present form, they said, the kit was hard to understand and met few learning objectives.

Next came a new stage of research. On the one hand, the project team tried to make the self-assessment tools more accessible in terms of their vocabulary; on the other hand, they wanted to integrate the material into an andragogical process so as to enable the participants to advance gradually in their learning. The researcher joined with an adult educationist.

SPRING 1989: Production of a video with fictional drama

The project already included plans to produce a documentary video to ensure a more uniform understanding of the process. Using ideas for scripts prepared by the researcher and the adult educationist, a fictional video drama was prepared under conditions that were far

[19] The CFP, under the responsibility of the Labour Ministry, administers training programs in cooperation with private enterprise, unions and various training organizations (schools, community organizations, etc.)

from ideal. We have observed that the video and the printed material complement each other well, although for the most part they were produced independently. [20]

FALL 1989: Experimenting with the kit

Eight groups and trainers had experimented with QC. An independent evaluator collected and analyzed the data. The piloting was carried out despite staff changes and although the project was well behind schedule. While the evaluator was carrying out her work, the researcher relied on telephone conversations to gather the main comments on the kit and its use.

The tests revealed that the workshops were progressing very well and that the overall objectives of the process were being met by the majority of the 80 participants. However, major changes had to be made in the last unit of activities and in the presentation of concepts. This pre-publication validation by people in training was extremely important for the editing, the design of the final kit, and the planning of the dissemination strategy.

5.3. Independent dissemination of Question de compétences[21]

COFFRE, Relais-femmes, and the ICÉA have published and disseminate the QC material in partnership. COFFRE administers the special QC fund, whereas both Relais-femmes and COFFRE are responsible for distribution.

The first promotional campaign lasted from November 1989 to May 1990. After 1990, it is in large part thanks to word of mouth and personal initiatives that QC has continued to sell for the last five years. The dissemination of the ideas (e.g., articles) contained in QC was very limited because of a lack of time in the context of the NLMIP project and a lack of back-up and availability on the part of the publishers. It is especially the NCF project that has provided exposure to the basic ideas, such as the broader concept of work.

The economic context in Quebec and Canada in the 1990s is indeed a major concern of organizations committed to the struggle for social equity. Funding is precarious at best, and the need for visibility and recognition is more urgent than ever. A kit such as QC is an interesting opportunity for its three publishers to increase their visibility. They have been particularly sensitive to the absence of acknowledgement in some cases.

5.4. Nos compétences fortes

In 1989, some of us thought that the QC kit still included too many reading and writing activities to be accessible to women with very little schooling. However, the concept of generic skills as the thread connecting heterogeneous experiences seemed particularly interesting for all population groups, whether men or women, who were unable to use their diplomas or their paid work experiences to find a job.

---

[20] In the case of the NCF video, production was totally integrated into the project and the video seems to be much more efficient than the previous production.

[21] By "independent" dissemination, I mean dissemination that is carried out after government funding has ended.

On the occasion of the 1990 forum, *Une société sans barrières* (A Society without Barriers), the aim of which was to promote the rights of illiterate people[22], the publishers of *Question de compétences* led a workshop on it. This practical workshop confirmed the interest of literacy groups in processes leading to recognition of people's own competences. The project to adapt QC for people with reading or writing difficulties began in the fall of 1993. Funding came from the federal and provincial governments.

5.5. *Obstacles, stepping back, forging ahead*

A number of difficulties were encountered during the development of the innovation, and even more arose during its dissemination (dissemination of QC and development of derived projects):

1. Firm resistance within Quebec society to the broadening of the concept of work to include work performed in community or private spheres;

2. Frequent movements of staff (toolmakers from the initial project, partner organization staff, funding agency staff);

3. Burn-out on the part of organizations due to difficult working conditions, and uncertainty of funding and drastic cuts to a great number of social programs in the 1990s;

4. Projects and contents supported more by individuals than by organizations;

5. Absence of a group assessment at the end of projects to consolidate and facilitate the transfer of experience within organizations and acknowledgement of individual contributions;

6. Little dissemination/understanding/integration of the project's ideas, particularly the concepts of work and recognition processes, in the various networks and public statements of the three publishers;

7. Perception of the publication of a training tool as an end in itself rather than as a means to contribute to the analysis and resolution of a broader problem;

8. Attachment, by organizations, of greater value to the development stages of projects, to research, and to the production of tools than to the stages of dissemination (distribution, monitoring of sales, knowledge and analysis of results obtained), consolidation and transfer of experience;

---

[22] The forum was jointly organized by the ICÉA, the Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec - RGPAQ (Quebec Association of Popular Literacy Groups) and the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec - CEQ (Quebec Teachers Confederation). I was in charge of organizing the contents.

9. During the dissemination period, more time was allotted to issues involving intellectual property, visibility, structures, and rules of operation than to the circulation and development of ideas or knowledge and analysis of the tool's repercussions in the milieus.

From 1988 to the present, there have been slack periods during which organizers and toolmakers have turned to other activities and have had little time and energy for the QC family and for innovation. When they come back to the generic skills project, they have more distance and new experiences that can be useful for the development of the projects.

Of course, the QC family has also benefited from conditions that were favourable to its development, particularly in the periods 1988-1989 and 1993-1995:

1. Programs such as NLMIP, as well as the funds actually granted for NCF;

2. The importance attributed to participants and facilitators in the development of QC: tests and the capacity to take the results into account in the long and short term;

3. The desire to reconcile traditional and modern forms of knowledge and the approach combining research and practice;

4. The active presence during the QC project of an actual training organization at the decision-making level;

5. The presence of organizations enjoying good social credibility;

6. The presence among the funders of people with experience in sectors providing services to the population. Their convictions and open attitudes;

7. The capacity to attract toolmakers with wide-ranging experience, knowledge and contacts in various areas and the creative leeway provided for them;

8. The ability to identify with the people we are addressing and to be attentive to the characteristics (and thus the differences) of the people who make up our clientele;

9. The capacity to stand firm or adjust fund-raising strategies by taking into account changing socio-political contexts;

10. The energy and profound convictions of a few individuals who agreed to work without pay to help the organizations to survive periods of crisis or consolidation of group experiences.

Bibliography

BÉLISLE, R. and BUSQUE, G. Reports on the meetings of the management committee from 1988 to 1990 (internal documents).

BÉLISLE, R. (1989). Synthèse des commentaires sur la version expérimentée de la trousse. Projet Reconnaissance des compétences des femmes. (Working document submitted to the authors of the kit and to the management committee.)

____. (1990). Reconnaissance des compétences des femmes : Plan Marketing. COFFRE, Relais-femmes, ICÉA (internal document).

____. (1990). Rapport d'atelier, congrès du CIAFT - 16 novembre 1990, atelier B-4 Question de compétences. Internal document presented to COFFRE.

____. (1991). *Guide d'utilisation de la démarche Question de compétences à l'intention de groupes de femmes ne faisant pas d'intégration au marché du travail*. Relais-femmes.

____. (1992). Devis de projet : Outil de formation « Les femmes immigrantes, leurs compétences génériques et le marché du travail québécois ». Collectif des femmes immigrantes and Relais-femmes (internal document).

____. (1993). Projet de formation des formatrices : Les compétences génériques des femmes immigrantes. Collectif des femmes immigrantes and Relais-femmes (internal document).

____. (ed.) (1995). *Nos compétences fortes*. ICEA.

BUSQUE, G. and ROY, F. (1989). Proposition de déroulement de l'ensemble de la démarche de reconnaissance des compétences génériques. (Internal document).

CIESIELSKI, G. and LORD, A. (1989). La reconnaissance des acquis et les femmes défavorisées au plan de l'emploi. Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail (CIAFT), information kit (internal document).

COFFRE. (1985). Projet de recherche : Reconnaissance des acquis expérientiels de femmes par les employeurs. (Internal document).

COMMISSION D'ÉTUDE SUR LA FORMATION DES ADULTES. (1982). *Apprendre : une action volontaire et responsable*. Statement on a general adult education policy in a perspective of continuing education. Quebec Government.

____. (n.d.) Contenu du vidéo sur la reconnaissance des compétences des femmes. (Internal document).

DE BELLEFEUILLE, L. (1983). *Rapport de la phase de mise au point du projet C.O.F.F.R.E.* (ZH-5823-4). Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu: COFFRE.

D'AMOUR, G. (1988). "L'évaluation des compétences génériques." *Actualité de la formation permanente* 95: 45-48.

FELX, C. (1990). Rapport d'évaluation de projet : Reconnaissance des compétences des femmes. (Internal document).

GÉRARD, F.-M. and ROEGIERS, X. (1993). *Concevoir et évaluer des manuels scolaires*. Brussels: De Boeck-Wesmael.

GROULX, M. (1991). Une expérience de formation en Belgique. Si on vous racontait... *Le Bouge* (a CIAFT bulletin) 8 (33), June.

INSTITUT CANADIEN D'ÉDUCATION DES ADULTES. (1987). *Développement d'un outil pour l'évaluation des compétences au service des femmes défavorisées*. Montreal: ICÉA, Relais-femmes, COFFRE, June (modified in September 1987).

____. (1989). *Question de compétences, un outil au service des femmes*. Cahier de formation. Montreal: COFFRE, Relais-femmes, ICÉA.

____. (1990). *Question de compétences, un outil au service des femmes*. Promotional brochure. Montreal: COFFRE, Relais-femmes, ICÉA.

LANGLOIS, L. (1989). *Reconnaissance des compétences professionnelles (R.C.P.)*. CFP.

VALLÉE, M. (1986). *La reconnaissance des acquis des femmes sur le marché du travail rémunéré*. COFFRE.

AND THE HAMMOCK LINGERS ON: WHITHER THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT?

Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh

University of Buea
Buea, Cameroon

1. Acting out: a methodology for empowerment

Theatre-for-Development (TFD) starts from the hypothesis that everyone can act and indeed does act; that the performance situation not only allows for creative expression but also provides a forum whereby the conflicts and contradictions within a given society can be resolved. The Theatre-for-Development process uses as its techniques the forms of cultural expression of a given society. It uses the art forms of the people including dance, music, song and dialogue. It is culture-specific and deals with the problems of a given place and situation. It is transient and, while the methodology can be replicated, a performance can only be meaningful at the time it is being presented. Theatre-for-Development is thus process-oriented and not product-oriented.

As a learning process the theatre provides the possibility for the community to discuss and gain insights into the issues surrounding its own existence. It develops a "critical awareness", which results in conscientization and eventually mobilization for action.

So far, what happens is that theatre animators go into a rural area or a deprived urban zone, carry out research with the inhabitants of the selected milieu, analyse the data to identify needs, create priorities, develop scenarios, rehearse these with everyone participating, and then perform to the participatory audience. The follow-up after the performance is most important because it is through this that the issues raised, contradictions discovered, and solutions put forward, can be made to achieve some meaningful change within the community. The Theatre-for-Development process is thus used to empower various communities to become "masters of their destiny".

In the last three decades a large number of people in several African countries have taken an interest in the educational and mobilization possibilities of drama. While these experiments have adopted a common label, "popular theatre" or "theatre-for-development" (TFD), the work has taken a number of distinct forms and orientations.

One of the earliest forms was the travelling theatre projects of the Universities of Ibadan (Nigeria), Makerere (Uganda), Nairobi (Kenya), Zamba (Malawi), Lusaka (Zambia), and Yaounde (Cameroon). Groups of university students would take ready-made plays to the provinces to break the monopoly of urban audiences over the theatre. However, it was soon realized that taking theatre to the people was not enough, and that many of the plays which were toured had little or no relevance to the experiences or aspirations of the communities.

About 1974, a number of adult educators working in Botswana initiated a new tradition, built on both traditional African performance traditions and Freirian andragogy. This of course was inspired by earlier experiments carried out in other African countries, where popular campaigns exploited the theatrical medium. The Botswanan experience was called the Laedza

Batanani and involved extension workers and local leaders, who developed their own plays on given subjects for purely didactic purposes and toured these in the villages (Kidd and Byram, 1977). The plays dwelt on a variety of subjects including agriculture, health care, sanitation, village self-reliance, community development, etc. While the themes treated were closer to the people's expectations than, say, the earlier European classics which had been put on tour, the didactic process corresponded simply to "banking". The process was hardly interactive. The local communities were still nothing more than simple recipients of pre-packaged information.

However, once this shortcoming was realized, a new aspect was introduced — that of having greater participation by the community in the drama-making process, and post-performance discussions with the local community were introduced.

It is difficult to trace all the various TFD experiences in Africa, let alone place them in chronological order. While in some places, the "banking" system is still being used, in others, a fully integrated performance structure has been achieved whereby the process of dramatization has been taken over by the villagers themselves. The experiments continue, and whichever methods are selected largely depend on the individual experiences of the project initiators as well as their personal inclinations.

In the work we have carried out so far, we have always tried to relate our experiences to the aspirations of the community. We have always tried to keep in mind our village/peasant/proletarian roots. We have always borne in mind that the arrival of pipe-borne water, as in my village, will not necessarily change the quality of life or the attitudes of the villagers. We have always been conscious that it is the aspirations of the communities in which we work that matter, not our personal expectations. We have always tried, as we did in the two workshops described in this case study, to go with the tide.

The particularly sceptical tone of this paper is not intended to dissuade prospective users of the methodology; rather it is intended to develop in them a more critical approach to the use of the methodology.

2. Two workshops

2.1 The Kumba/Konye Workshop

The Theatre-for-Development workshop in Kumba took place in December 1984, about fifteen months after a previous one held in Murewa (Zimbabwe) in August/September of 1983 (see Kidd, 1986). We may have to start from the end of the workshop, and look back to its genesis. Penina Mlama (1991), who was the group leader for those who worked in Konye (Kumba), has rather bitter memories of the attitude of the resource persons and the students from the Community Development Specialization School who were trainees in the methodology. The workshop process itself went through without hitches. It ended with a memorable performance which brought three rival villages together and resulted in their pooling their resources to build a bridge to replace a rather precarious hammock that linked the villages to the farmlands on the other side of the Rive Mungo.

To celebrate the success of the workshop, the village women prepared a thanksgiving ritual which included a special meal for the workshop participants. Half way through the ritual the international resource persons and the trainees had abandoned the women without even

eating the food and gone to the village beer parlour. What insensitivity! (Eyoh, 1986, 1991; Mlama, 1991).

This, perhaps, is part of the reason why the enthusiasm generated by the workshop petered out rather fast. Another ritual of pacification had to be organized later on by the project coordinator (myself), who had been accused of having brought some foreigners to the village to insult the women. Yet, the villagers remember fondly how the workshop had changed their perceptions. They remembered how the process of analysis which resulted in the dramatization had helped to alter their world view. Some of them remembered quite remarkably the details of the process.

The Kumba region of Cameroon was chosen for logistic reasons. It is an area which I know very well because I originate from there. I felt that with a strong tradition of community development within the region and an increasing self-confidence amongst the people, there was a need for greater cohesion as well as a change in attitudes. An added advantage in the choice of the region was also the fact that the Community Development Specialization School was situated in Kumba. It would provide a number of students who could then serve as multipliers of the experience. Many of them, we understand, have continued to use the methodology in their various work stations.

Konye, which was amongst the three villages selected, the others being Kake and Kurume, is a growth area. Konye has expanded rather rapidly in recent years so as to encompass two other villages, Ndoi and Ngolo Bolo. To the unwary traveller, the whole of this conglomeration is one village. It is not until you get to settle in Konye that you discover that indeed, the three adjoining villages attempt as much as possible to maintain their individual identities. Konye and Ndoi are both Bakundu villages. Ngolo Bolo, which is in the middle, is a Mbonge village. The two languages are mutually intelligible. The original settlers in the area were the Bakundus, who later on welcomed the Mbonges amongst them. The Konye and Ndoi people are seemingly more "emancipated", while the Ngolo Bolo people are still more tied to their traditions. The Mbonges have turned out to be more enterprising and have since surpassed the Bakundus in productivity, as is to be seen in the quality of the habitat.

The section where the Mbonges are settled has the most convenient part of the River Mungo for a hammock to cross. Repairs to the hammock often posed a problem. Technical advice was given for the villagers to pool their resources to construct a bridge. Penina Mlama (in Eyoh, 1991) describes the situation the advisers encountered in Konye when they arrived there in December 1984:

> "Firstly, we couldn't work with only one village because the bridge was a project which involved all three. The biggest problem was that the three villages could not get along — so how were we to work with the three when the villagers themselves were not on good terms with each other? (...) So, we went to the first chief and talked to him and his councilors, tried to persuade him to sit together with the other villagers to discuss their problems. Then we moved on to the others. During this first stage, however, we confronted the problem that the chief we met last was angry because we'd gone to see the others before him and that the others may have already prejudiced the group against him. This put us on the alert that the conflict was bigger than we had thought and this led us to plan a strategy on how to bring these people together. So we persuaded them and fortunately they agreed with us to try and call a meeting of the three councils together so that they could try and see how they could resolve this problem of the

bridge.(...) And we tried on a programme of doing an improvisation for them before the meeting. We settled on a fictional story centred around the theme of disunity. We developed a story about three brothers who had inherited property from their father, but who were always quarrelling amongst themselves. The youngest son gets the section of the farm which is closest to the river and the river is eating into his farm. So he tries to prevent this from going on and he consults an agricultural engineer, who advises him to build an embankment. He discusses the matter with his brothers, who refuse to assist him in the project. However, he succeeds in raising the money to buy the materials for the construction, but when the vehicle delivering this arrives, the elder brothers refuse to let the driver pass through their farms. A heated argument ensues because the youngest of the brothers tries to explain to the others that if they don't assist him, they will soon be the victims themselves. In the end, exasperated by their lack of co-operation, he takes the matter before the village council."

What we did was to perform this before the councils, and instead of ending the play by deciding who was wrong, we asked the village councils, which were the village audience, to judge this case and settle the matter between the three brothers.

Of course, this worked well because it broke the ice. Immediately, they realized that we were talking about them. They said we were trying to portray their own problem and immediately they said they understood that we were trying to mirror their own disunity and they took it very nicely. They went into discussing the thrust of the story and they agreed that the brothers were being stupid.The villagers very much appreciated this and expressed their gratitude for what we had tried to do by bringing them together. They promised they would forget their differences by forming a committee consisting of members of the three villages; that this would be an ad-hoc bridge committee. This comprised twelve people. The committee decided to meet the following day and when it met with the workshop participants, the committee tried to chart out the strategies for the building of the bridge. We were truly amazed by the enthusiasm of the villagers. The meeting was very successful because they came out with concrete proposals on how they were going to go about the bridge project.

The essential thing was for them to mobilize the villagers to contribute funds which would constitute the basic percentage that was needed to start a self-help project in the village. And by the time we left this village, this committee had started working and even at the meeting, members of the committee began making their own contributions because people said that they were going to go ahead with the building of the bridge.

2.1.1. The core and the crux of the methodology: participation for empowerment or domestication?

The process which Penina Mlama describes so eloquently is three-pronged: data collection and analysis, dramatic skills including story improvisation and performance, and post-performance discussion leading to critical awareness and mobilization for change.

The methodology of Theatre-for-Development is based on the need for change and the possibility of bringing this about with the full participation of the people who are the subject of the change. The educational process is one of developing greater awareness of one's environment and the possibility of optimizing it for the achievement of a better life. Theatre-for-Development is an educational process which focuses on problem-solving involving the villagers themselves; that is, with the participation of the direct beneficiaries of whatever

process of change is being carried out. It provides interlearning — a sort of give and take, a process of continuous questioning and assimilation. The processes of transformation necessary within a given society are seen as endogenous and not exogenous. TFD rejects the omniscience of the city bureaucrat who sits in his heavily upholstered chair in an air-conditioned office and designs projects for the rural masses, without either consulting or seeking inputs from the direct beneficiaries. It is a method that empowers the marginalized, encourages them to articulate their problems and seeks collective solutions to these.

In the context of the Kumba workshop (Eyoh, 1986) the theatre was used as a medium for development communication, and it is perhaps here that changes in the approach need to be introduced. The process described above by Penina Mlama can fall prey, in spite of all the good intentions and successes scored, to the pitfall of domestication. According to Tar Ahural (1986):

> "Popular theatre which started as a praxis for offering challenges to oppressive structures so that human beings can achieve self-dignity and self-realization, especially in societies that have suffered heavy fragmentation and class divisions, has, over the years in Africa, shifted its emphasis. Now it seeks to offer rural man new ways of looking at development, new ways of using available tools and materials for greater productivity and profit. In fact, new ways of mastering the available rural environment especially for productive purposes. On the surface this may appear like distinguishing without a difference. Yet, there is a subtle difference. The radical, and indeed the ideological, aspects are moving out of popular theatre in Africa and now it seems the concern is more with modernizing development strategies so as to remove the clichéd stereotyped characterizations that have been in practice so that greater productivity and profit can be achieved. The emphasis also seems to be on providing services and ensuring basic needs which to me, is nothing more than encouraging the growth of a bureaucratic system that ensures new skilful ways of exploitation. As Stephen Chifunyise put it in Kumba during one of the sessions: 'Theatre-for-Development does not have to be confrontational.' This appears to be the spirit that informs popular theatre activities in Africa now."

The present debate going on amongst Theatre-for-Development or popular theatre enthusiasts in Africa focuses on whether TFD should be radicalized and Marxist, or conservative. In fact, it is a debate which is to be found even on the more orthodox theatrical scene, where political activists would prefer to see a theatre of confrontation rather than entertainment. Whichever way, it is difficult to see the theatre as being neutral, since even the most passive of performances is bound to be a statement of one kind or the other. In any event, theatre from its very origins has always been considered the most subversive of all the arts.

If we look back on the Konye experience as described by Mlama, it can certainly not be said that the slogan "Unity is strength" is baseless. Besides, the workshop participants did not set out to impose their point of view. Rather, they were obliged to respond to the situation they met in the field. People's power can only be derived from a collective endeavour. The problem often arises that this collective strength is not transformed into political power. The theatre process should therefore be seen as empowering the powerless.

The debate continued amongst the participants at the workshop as to which methodology to use. There were those who preferred a confrontational, radical approach of

challenging the *status quo*, while others preferred a subtler approach. In between were those who advocated that it was not right to direct the process, but rather, that things were to be allowed to emanate from the research and analysis in the villages.

There are many popular theatre enthusiasts working in Africa today who have abandoned the mainstream theatre or decided that performances should be returned to their traditional role, emanating from the people and being used as a tool for their conscientization. Theatre has therefore come to be seen as a means of communication, a tool which could be placed in the hands of the voiceless and through which they could articulate their problems and seek communal solutions. This often works not simply through the final performance but more through the process of information gathering, structural social analysis, social mapping, improvisations to deepen understanding of changing reality, the drama-making process, post-performance discussion and follow-up. TFD works as an endogenous communication medium because it utilizes local traditions and folklore, including music, dance, masks and dialogue. Erroneously, however, it has almost come to be seen as a panacea for development communication problems. As Tar Ahura (1986) comments, "rather than looking at long term objectives, we settled down to identifying a hierarchy of needs and operating at the base level, limiting our work to bread and butter issues." TFD has the potential to achieve more, depending on the environment in which it operates, as will be seen in the second case dealt with in this paper.

And so, in Konye, the methodology was used to encourage people, not to riot against a government which had been totally oblivious to their plight, but rather, to build up communal strength which would galvanize the collective efforts of the community towards development. The limitation here was obviously that we concentrated on tangible results and seem to have ignored the intangible psychological development of community empowerment. But this was equally evident in the change of attitude from one of mutual hostility to mutual understanding.

2.2. *The Oturkpo/Onyuwei Workshop: Reconstructing the innovative event*

This workshop held in Oturkpo (Nigeria) moved a step further in rapport-building between the workshop participants and the village communities as well as in involving the community in the process. Amongst the participants were lecturers and students of the Ahmadu Bello Theatre Collective, and some ten or so international resource persons drawn from Jamaica, the UK, the United States, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Cameroon, etc. Our group worked at Onyuwei.

Learning from the Kumba experience, the resource persons and participants moved into the villages for a longer period, spending a total of ten out of the fourteen days that the workshop lasted, in the villages, following the village tide, living intensively with the people and participating in their daily chores, absorbing the pulsating rhythms of village life, and sharing experiences.

The participants took their tape recorders and notebooks into the farms and used them if the occasion demanded. Information gathered from the village square was later on cross-checked with the village head and *vice versa*. While keeping in mind such approaches as the use of interviews, formal meetings, observation, tape recordings and so on, we opted simply to attach ourselves to the community and to allow the village tide to carry us along. We joined the villagers in their communal labours including making yam molds and clearing community roads linking Onyuwei to all the surrounding villages. We also joined in several meetings held

in the village by various groups whenever one was announced to us. Most afternoons and evenings were also used for cultural sharings between villagers and the workshop participants, and we were to discover the richness and variety of the culture and traditions of the Onyuwei people, through which the community articulated its problems.

Onyuwei is one of those hamlets thrown off the development path because the road missed it, and not even the railway line which passes by the village has affected the development of this hinterland village. There is not even a railway siding.

> "For historical reasons, including war and security, the people of Onyuwei had migrated from Ogene by way of Otobi to their present location. Onyuwei is a corruption of Onuwei, which means "Fight of Shame". The victims of internecine wars, their ancestors discovered a highly fertile tract of land buffered by a network of rivers and streams and founded the village where it now stood. The waterways helped to keep off the marauding forces of other groups. Ironically, this same buffer now threatens the very survival of the community. This is because the village now needs vital supplies from the urban areas and must reach out with its predominantly agricultural produce, a process hampered by the absence of a permanent bridge, compounded by bad roads and the periodic flooding of the streams." (Eyoh, 1992)

And so, once again, lives were determined by yet another need for a bridge, that link to development — that vital link, both physical and metaphysical. But this was not all. We discovered during our stay in this village the decrepit nature of the village primary school, built in 1932; the lack of a proper water supply and the non-existence of primary health-care facilities; the manifest feudalistic nature of the power structure; feelings of abandonment; and latent tensions with the neighbouring Adankari village; a high incidence of childhood pregnancies; a certain levity in the handling of sexual matters within art forms; issues of gender and the generation gap. In fact, the village had already been invaded with hard-core pornographic posters on the walls of the huts of all the young men. Western civilization in its most perverted form was invading the village, and there were FM stations blaring disco music all day long. We equally discovered a rich oral culture and performance forms.

2.2.1. Selecting subjects for dramatization

There were several issues which could not be handled in a single workshop situation, and every attempt was bogged down by the incessant return to the issue of the bridge. The community had made several contributions towards the construction of a main bridge linking Onyuwei to the next village, Adankari. Unfortunately, however, this was never enough to construct a permanent structure and the temporary bridges put up invariably got swept away during the rains because of flooding. This community was particularly sensitive and was rather vociferous and articulate in condemning government for a lack of equity in locating development projects. They were aware of less populous and more remote villages which faired much better simply because they had highly placed sons. But what was particularly remarkable was the fact that their frustrations had not tempered their resolve, although it was evident that they had already developed a culture of resignation, which in turn was fast turning into a culture of defiance.

What we did was to use improvisations to try to deepen our collective (both villagers' and workshop participants') understanding of the situation, and each evening we gathered in

the village square with villagers and had them act out their problems. During each session, the villagers took turns to act out the various roles, either to give an interpretation of situations and events they thought had not been properly presented, or to advance the story line. We were joined on one occasion by a lady who turned out to be a celebrated musician from the area, who had just arrived at the village. This added even more pep to our improvisations.

2.2.2 Acting out village reality

What turned out to be the final performance was rather an end-of-workshop extravaganza, because we were not sure what direction the improvisations would have taken if we had stayed longer in the village. However, on this occasion nothing rehearsed before happened. I quote from an earlier article written just at the end of the workshop, when my memory was still fresh (Eyoh, 1992):

> "The play begins with a storyteller, Ogiri, welcoming the audience and announcing the forthcoming election to be contested by two candidates who are expected soon to visit the village. At this point he announces their names and takes up his flute, summoning the first candidate into the arena. In a little while, drums begin to roll and the first candidate, Ejembi, with his supporters, bursts into the arena in response to the drums. Ejembi kills the music and starts to explain the platform on which he is contesting the election. He is full of histrionics. He cajoles and bullies, promises cows, beer, goats, a car for the farmers, unlimited cash, yams and the completion of the bridge within forty-eight hours of his election. He calls in his collaborators whom he describes as engineers from Cameroon, Jamaica, Canada and London (sic). All this is done to the creative echoes of Etachum, the female singer, in a melodious rendition. Ejembi concludes his campaign by distributing money and then dances out with his group.
>
> "Ogiri picks up his flute and summons the second candidate. The same campaign process is repeated. The second candidate is less colourful but is certainly more realistic, although he has to have recourse to Ejembi's methods in the end. Now there is virtually no difference between both candidates.
>
> "At the end of the campaigning both candidates are again summoned into the arena to be questioned by the 'electorate': the audience. The storyteller calls on them to ask any questions they like of both candidates. There are rumblings here and there in the audience and the first speaker, Etachum (the singer, acting triple roles as echo, mistress of ceremonies and a member of the community) fires the first shot in song. She articulates the point of view of the community, their refusal to pay tax in protest at the abject neglect they have been suffering from successive governments to which they have continued to pay taxes for many years. She also sums up the community's resignation. She nips in and out of character; one moment she is a pregnant woman who cannot have medical attention because of the remoteness of her village from the nearest medical centre; at another moment she is someone else. One issue she illustrates dramatically, another she enhances with her presence in song. It is simply fascinating.
>
> "Another lady from the audience takes over, holding a rickety stick to indicate that she is playing the role of an elderly lady. She moves haltingly, all the while indicating her defiance. The surprises have only just begun. The audience has finally taken over the process and the facilitators can only look on. The magic of

the theatre is beginning to emanate from the audience. She throws out a question. The candidates attempt responses. They are jeered by the audience. The questioning continues. After a little while, Ogiri's flute takes over, but the village head questions the candidates. He is fiery in his questioning and confirms the fury of the community with the ineffectiveness of all politicians. A cry goes out from one member of the audience/participants that they will boycott the election and this is echoed by the whole audience. This brings the first movement of the performance to an end.

"The storyteller announces the beginning of the second movement. A resource person enters the arena to announce the arrival of a government official, in this case, in the person of one of the resource persons, Jenkeri Okwori. He picks up a blanket, wraps it around himself and salutes the audience. A male member of the participatory audience dresses himself up as an old man suffering from lumbago and follows Jenkeri, now village chief. They both move to chairs placed for them and await the arrival of the visitor from Tanzania, Ghomche Materego — another resource person. He arrives and there is an exchange between him and the (fictional) village chief regarding the non-payment of taxes by the community. He is asked by the chief to find out the reason from the participatory audience.

"Once again fiction gives way to reality as the people turn their venom on the government official. A woman, shaking all over in fury, begins to talk, flatly at first, but then starts to shout and shriek as she is urged on the audience. She is on the other side of the arena but jumps into it and advances towards the official. Only the intervention of the interpreter, Egbade, saves the government official (Ghomche) from being punched in the face by the woman. The gist of the shouting boils down to the issue of the bridge and the government's neglect of the village. More members of the audience take their turn to lash out at the government official. Each time the problems are reiterated and the defiance confirmed.

"At this point, an interesting twist happens. The real village head enters the arena and once again pays obeisance to the fictional chief in the play, who quickly pitches him against the government official. This triggers off an exchange between the two. The real village head reaffirms the feelings of his people while the government official (Ghomche) accuses him of neglect of duty, since he is the government tax collector. (...) A few more contributions and the fictional chief calls for group discussion amongst the villagers. He and the government official now move to the real chief and are told that the community is at a cultural performance and invites them to sit down and watch. Another surprise! The Ikyahoho masquerade which we had thought to be a sacred performance not to be integrated into our presentation, storms the arena with a performance of sheer beauty. At the end of the show the real village chief insists on talking to the government official, who has already come out of his role. He is forced to come back into the role to face another barrage of questions and accusations. This is later followed by the comments of the various audience groups. When it is felt that the discussion is running out of steam the mistress of ceremonies is signalled and, in her characteristic creativeness, she starts a song, pulling the audience with her."

3. Issues of relevance, continuity and replication

The performances have ended but the process goes on. As the community members disperse to their various homesteads, analysis continues. We hope that the spirit lives on. The villagers of Konye and Onyuwei have been provided with a tool to question their reality and change it. They have acquired a new methodology of perceiving themselves and have been "capacitated" to design their destiny.

The import of Theatre-for-Development work can only be properly evaluated in a context in which it is on-going. The one-off workshops, despite their tremendous successes in advancing TFD methodology, may help to propagate this internationally, but the people in whose localities such work is carried out must be made to build sustainable structures to be able to derive full benefit from whatever capacities of empowerment such a workshop may have brought into their lives, otherwise the experiment may not be worthwhile.

What, however, seems to be the case today, is not the failure of the methodology, but rather compromised targets, due largely to a failure of the macro system. This could not have been anticipated within the micro community in which the workshop was located. The international economic system which dictates prices for the farm produce of these villagers is way beyond their control, and they fall prey only too easily to fluctuations in commodity prices. If TFD had been anchored in the villages, however, it would have provided a dynamic tool for the constant examination of communal life and changing reality.

TFD methodology addresses itself to the deprived, even though the process of conscientization increasingly seems to be needed also by the governing classes — that group which has long since merchandised its societies, most often for peanuts.

In the Konye group, the councillors, within the micro community, were all conscious or unconscious collaborators of the dominant class, especially because their positions had to be confirmed by the administration. Little wonder then that they had their personal whims and caprices. What is important is the effectiveness of the dramatization process in changing the attitudes of the villagers and providing them with fresh perspectives with which to look at their society. The educational process here was not directed to literacy or numeracy, but to socio-political emancipation. A hurdle in their search for collective survival had been removed. Their interpersonal sensitivity had been enhanced and they had discovered a new method of communal communication.

Unfortunately, however, a large international workshop with resource persons from all over the world, who congregate in a little village to try out an experiment like the ones in Murewa, Kumba or Oturkpo, is most certainly not the best way to go about operating the process. International workshops are funded events. It is difficult, even when grassroots groups are initiated into the process, for them to be able to sustain the effort. Transportation, feeding and other logistic problems come to bear.

3.1. Ideological constraints

Equally, there needs to be greater clarification of the nature of the ideological basis for TFD work. The much celebrated Kamirithu Experience in Kenya in the 1970s resulted in the exile of the two Ngugis-wa-thiongo, long settled in London, and Wa-Mirii, who has continued his work in Zimbabwe with the Zimbabwean Foundation for Education with Production

(ZIMFEP). The Kumba Workshop operated under strict state scrutiny, which may have inhibited the process.

There are certainly those who will see the results of the Konye experience as having the effect of an opiate and thus as being domesticating. It has also been said that this process is rather limiting. The nature of the themes dealt with can hardly be all-encompassing. It can also be argued that issues relating to a people's development are as important as those relating to their liberation, and that both ought to be seen as mutually inclusive, rather than exclusive.

The African Theatre-for-Development worker is caught up in a labyrinth of contradictions which most often end up compromising the ideological base of his work. Even the inside-out method, which is today favoured in place of the outside-in — that is, where the process is made to emanate as far as possible from within a given society and is not imposed from without — has its visible limitations. This is especially so because the resource people at many of these workshops, as Kerr (1991) has mentioned, have come from a petty-bourgeois background. As we said before, the fact that many important issues, especially those concerning gender and youth, may be relegated in the prioritization process and social taboos may oblige the victims not to bring these up for fear of recrimination.

3.2. Constraints on facilitators

In Cameroon, however, unlike Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe or Zambia, TFD methodology is yet to take off, in spite of the successes registered by the Kumba workshop. The reasons for this are mainly that the work was initiated by university lecturers who have rather too much on their hands and cannot therefore follow up what was achieved in Kumba — perhaps as a result of the workshop I was, for example, appointed Director of Cultural Affairs for my country in 1986 and had to concentrate on other exigencies of my new job; secondly, that the workshop relied so much on international funding without any locally sustainable resources; thirdly, that there was a hostile political climate at the time with a monolithic party system that took exception to any attempt at giving voice to the voiceless.

Also, it has always been a Herculean task to seek funding for more workshop projects. A project submitted to the European Union/CICIBA project in Libreville in 1986 is still pending in 1995. Thirdly, having written extensively about the Kumba Workshop, I fell victim to what Kerr (1991) refers to as "guru-ization", resulting from the fact that we are adopted by certain donor agencies, and spend more time talking about the achievements of the past than continuing to develop and perfect the methodology in the field.

It must also be said that the whole of the African continent is in a state of effervescence, and what may have held true a couple years ago, does not hold true today. In Cameroon, the situation has certainly changed. The direction which change is taking, however, is a matter of conjuncture. Some 80 political parties exist in Cameroon, although the dominant one still remains the party which was in power in 1984. It may perhaps be necessary to organize another workshop to see what effect the new political dispensation has had on the local communities.

Another major problem is that practitioners must turn themselves into theoreticians in order to elaborate systems of performance and explain structures of existence. The literate world demands that each event be labelled... it must be signposted. But the theatre is ephemeral; no single performance resembles any other, even when the script is the same, let alone within the context of spontaneous dramaturgy, i.e., TFD. Many practitioners would

rather concentrate on their work in the field than on theoretical work in libraries. The concomitant is that those who are likely to theorize about this work, may have little field experience or the analytical tools for such work.

The university position from which many TFD practitioners in Africa operate, demands that they "publish" the results of their work. While this is good in itself because it provides a body of material that describes the processes, the exigencies of scientific writing may end up mystifying rather than demystifying the work. Popular theatre or Theatre-for-Development is basically a rural initiative. Couching the process in heavy analytical jargon may only alienate the process from those for whom it is intended. Also, the disciplinary provenance of the practitioner of TFD (theatre practitioner, development agent, adult educator, political activist) is most likely to influence the nature of the discourse — theatrical, andragogical, developmental or socio-political. This in itself is not bad as it is clearly indicative of the interdisciplinary approach to development strategies. Theatre should be considered only as a catalyst in this process, enabling larger perspectives to be gained.

4. Re-evaluating TFD

Within Cameroon there is the realization today that it is not only the marginalized areas that need to be conscientized, but equally those responsible for their marginalization. This has given rise to a wider view of TFD which has left the marginalized areas and has now entered the more formal theatre. Playwrights such as Kum'a N'dumbe, Bole Butake, Ndachi Tagne and Bate Besong, to name just a few, are the most visible in using this method, which may best be described as agitprop. The difference here is in methodology, since they present finished products.

4.1. Focus on the process

Theatre-for-Development concentrates on the process and not the product. The dramatic process becomes a catalyst rather than an aim in itself. It provides a context within which people can articulate their problems, examine them to deepen their understanding and seek to discover the contradictions existing within their society. It permits them to seek collective solutions. The pedagogic process is essentially dialogic, it is interactive. It provides possibilities for interlearning.

In both the Konye and the Onyuwei experiences, theatre provided the context for most of this. In Konye, it did lead to the forging of a more dynamic link for a previously dismembered society, albeit if only briefly. In Onyuwei, we find a people galvanized in protest against a government that has been totally oblivious to their aspirations. In both instances, theatre became an empowering experience. While in Konye it resulted in the collective resolve to build a bridge which provided a vital link for the sustenance of productivity, in Onyuwei, it resulted in revolt. The circumstances were not the same, and therefore the results could not have been the same. Konye is on a main highway, even though this has been allowed to deteriorate, but Onyuwei is a more remote, almost abandoned hinterland hamlet. Konye is a semi-urban town with a mixture of ethnic groups. Onyuwei is virtually an isolated village. While Konye has become a mixture of mini-cultures, Onyuwei has maintained its cultural

distinctiveness. It is evident therefore, that each of these situations demanded a different approach, hence the insistence on process rather than product.

On both the occasions described, the workshop organizers and participants were drawn from among TFD enthusiasts and theoreticians who were experimenting with the methodology, with financial and material inputs from international donor agencies. Within these groups was a mixture of ideological leanings — leftist, centrist and rightist. Each of the resource persons tended to have a personal agenda, which not even the traditional briefing meetings at the beginning could reconcile.

Even within the same context, the outcome of the process was different in each of the three selected villages. In Kumba, plays were performed in two of the three villages, whereas in the third, the process was on-going and did not result in a performance as such. In Oturkpo, only Onyuwei experienced what could be termed a veritable performance. What we find in both cases is the expression of a life-world which is peculiar to each group.

In both areas in which the workshops were held, they were introduced by "outsiders" in the sense that funds, organizational support and resource persons came from abroad. The villagers chosen were therefore not particularly active in the decision to hold the workshops, with the exception perhaps of the fact that the project co-ordinators originated from the regions. Networks were created, involving the local community, the international resource persons, funding agencies, and the state apparatus. But this last point has always been a constraint to the process because of fears that the process might get out of hand. Continuity and sustainability are also compromised because of the nature of the funding, which leaves most of the projects a one-off affair.

4.2. And after the floodlights dim

However, whatever the outcome of a workshop, its import lies in follow-up action. As Jenkeri Okori (1992) reports, such action has been taken in the Oturkpo District in Nigeria:

> "The first step taken by the communities was to seek ways of raising income. Onyuwei and Adankari decided on communal farms while Otobi (the women's wing of the Otobi Development Association) opted for a food processing machine. In collaboration with the NPTA [Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance], proposals to this effect were drawn and sent to donor agencies. Luck smiled when the Canada Fund responded. Now the projects have started off in earnest in the three communities."

This is a typical success story. Every workshop produces its own discoveries and experiences. The nature, place and timing of workshops throw up different issues; but in each instance, the crucial question remains. How far can popular theatre go in empowering people? Can this be meaningful empowerment if it is not tied to tangible programmes which people can see and feel? How can this methodology be sustained within any given consequences of empowerment?

At Kumba, we concluded as follows (Eyoh, 1986):

> "The first lesson is that popular theatre should be pursued with caution and the methodology should be flexible. It needs to be embarked upon as a continuing process — the performance itself being an (ad-hoc) actualization of this. The people's own art

forms need to form the basis of the work and as much as possible, participants should only act as catalysts. To be able to know the people well, there seems to be no better way than associating fully with them — meeting them in the villages, joining them in their daily chores and sharing with them their life styles. But then, how can this be sustained? Is an international seminar the ideal? Can follow-up work be effectively organized? Is the methodology itself viable? Is the whole question of Theatre-for-Development or theatre for integrated rural development not just another fad or is it really a viable medium for adult education and mass mobilization? What have been the problems encountered in the process in other countries and what solutions have been proffered? How is it possible to organize follow-up? Is there a necessity for government intervention and will such intervention itself not constitute the demise of the process? Can individuals sustain the work without additional support from without? Is there really a possibility of invigorating rural communities with a sense of belonging with a status-quo which at best treats them with benign neglect? And, to perhaps crown it all, can Theatre-for-Development be apolitical?"

This last question is occasioned by the fact that during the Kumba Workshop we worked under perpetual security supervision, having received a letter of admonishment from the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon to steer away from political themes, as if this is ever possible when one is involved in class relationships. In Nigeria, where democratic practices have been ensconced for much longer, the Ahmadu Bello Theatre Collective does not work under such constraints and it was therefore possible for the people of Onyuwei to give vent to their frustrations. But where does this take them under a military regime that can sequestrate the supposed winner of the presidential race in a democratic election?

5. The potential of TFD

We do believe strongly in the viability and validity of TFD as an educational medium, in spite of many of the contradictions which beset the practitioners. TFD has the capacity to enable communities to improve on their life styles, and to encourage total participation in developing community agendas as well as in developing and preserving cultural and environmental assets. TFD helps to develop a community's capacity for survival and self-regeneration. While, for instance, the bridge to replace the hammock is yet a dream and the hammock lingers on, the villagers of Konye have maintained their newly found solidarity and today, with the emergence of relative democracy, the vibrance of the community is felt more than ever before.

As I conclude this case study, I have just been reading a new book with case studies on Augusto Boal's work. Of interest is a comment made by David Diamond of the Vancouver-based Headlines Theatre Power Plays Project (1994) as to how he has been working:

"It seems to me that it is not possible or healthy for any of us to do the work of Boal. We all live in very different cultures in communities with very different needs. Boal himself, once he left Brazil, could no longer do 'the work of Augusto Boal' as it had been done in Brazil. He had to discover 'the work of Augusto Boal' as it could be done in Paris."

We are all discovering and continue to discover the methodologies of Theatre-for-Development as we work from one situation to the other. We continue to re-invent as we move along, adapting ourselves to the environments in which we operate. We must continue to negotiate the different circumstances we meet in our work. We need to continue to follow the tide, building bridges where necessary or demolishing them as the occasion demands. But the preoccupations continue to be similar everywhere. Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz (1994) express similar apprehensions to those we had in 1986:

> "Who can and who cannot facilitate political work toward social change? Under what conditions (historically, environmentally, psycho-dynamically, etc.) do these techniques work? What are the criteria for determining whether these techniques work or not? What is the relationship between personal growth and social change? What power dynamics constitute TO's (Theatre of the Oppressed) theatrical methods/forms and how do they subvert and/or sustain traditional structures of power? What intercultural collisions has this body of techniques had to address in order to survive? In what forms is it surviving and towards what ends?"

Some ten years after the Kumba Workshop, these questions still remain. It is for all of us to try to answer them. We need to continue to re-invent the methodology so that we can arrive some day at a sustainable form of TFD. We still continue with Theatre-for-Development work in the hope that some day, we may be able to find solutions to our communal angst. It is this dynamic which has become a sustaining force to those of us who are multipliers of what was introduced by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram in Botswana some 30 years ago, drawing their inspiration from Freire and Boal, and it has led us to the recognition of the possibilities of modernizing the functions of African traditional performing arts. What we have come to realize is the existence of an infinite variety of methods and that most of these work, whatever criteria we adopt in assessing them. But we need to guard against these methods being co-opted by the ruling classes and used to domesticate marginalized people.

Bibliography

AHURA, Tar. (1986). Popular Theatre and Popular Development Strategies: An Assessment of the Kurume Experience. In: EYOH, H.N. *Hammocks to Bridges*, 171-182. Yaounde: BET & Co.

DIAMOND, David. (1994). Out of Science: Headlines Theatre and Power plays. In: Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, eds. *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy and Activism*, 35-52. London: Routledge.

EYOH, H.N. (1986). *Hammocks to Bridges: An Experience in Theatre for Development*. Yaounde: BET & Co.

____ (1991). *Beyond the Theatre*. Bonn: German Foundation for International Development.

____. (1992). Nigeria: Theatre for Empowerment. In: POSTER, C. and ZIMMER J., eds. *Community Education in the Third World*. London: Routledge.

KERR, David. (1991). Participatory Popular Theatre: The Highest Stage of Cultural Underdevelopment? *Research in African Literatures* 20 (3): 74.

KIDD, Ross. (1986). Popular Theatre, Conscientization and Popular Organization. Toronto. Mimeo.

KIDD, Ross and BYRAM, Martin. (1977). Laedza Batanani: village theatre for development, *Botswana Adult Education Newsletter* 1 (1): 5-7.

MLAMA, Penina. (1991). *Culture and Development: The Popular Theatre Approach in Africa*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

OKORI, Jenkeri. (1992). Empowering the Disempowered: Using Theatre for Rural Transformation in Nigeria. *NAWE* 1: 650-53.

SCHUTZMAN Mady and COHEN-CRUZ J., eds. (1994). *Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy and Activism*. London: Routledge.

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS' SCHOOL OF THE UNION OF PALESTINIAN MEDICAL RELIEF COMMITTEES

Jihad Mash'al

Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees

1. Introduction: The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees

The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees is a voluntary, broadly based democratic health care organization. Originally founded in 1979, it was a response to the severely deteriorating health care infrastructure under Israeli military rule. At the time, the majority of rural communities in the area, where 70% of the population lives, lacked adequate health care facilities. Moreover, a systematic neglect, suppression and distortion of the local health care system, controlled by the Israeli Government, led to the closure of many facilities, the deterioration of many services that existed before 1967 and military occupation, and the increasing dependence of Palestinians on the Israeli medical establishment.

At the time, the general health conditions of the population under occupation left a lot to be desired: given an infant mortality rate of 50-90 deaths per 1000 live births, relatively high levels of malnutrition among infants and young children, a variety of infections, including parasitic infestations, and a lack of potable and clean water supplies, sewage systems and other infrastructural facilities crucial for health, the response of the local medical profession called for more curative services within the framework of the biomedical model of conceiving health. This model is based on the notion of health as a biological construction, and the notion of the body as a set of inter-related systems. This fails to include social, psychological, environmental, economic and cultural factors and their impact on health. Consequently, within this framework, solving health problems is based on the purchase of equipment and on the provision of medicines, in contrast to improvements in living conditions and the prevention of disease.

Thus calls were made to increase the number of hospital beds, to add new incubators to existing facilities and to import new types of diagnostic equipment. Moreover, local classical medical care providers conflated health conditions with services: they discussed health conditions in terms of the lack of services, omitting, with very rare exceptions, the importance of the physical, social and cultural environment and poverty in determining health status, and ignoring the need to include communities in the solution of health problems. Such a conception led to the reinforcement of popular and incorrect beliefs that health services are inadequate unless they provide the patient with a pill, an injection, or an order for an X-ray examination.

1.1. The foundation of the Union

By the end of the 1970s it was becoming clear to Palestinians that a move towards general grassroots mobilization was becoming a necessity for the fulfillment of basic needs, and, indeed, for survival. It is within this context that the Union was first formed, by a very small group of medical and health care professionals. At the point of inception, the emphasis

was mostly on dealing with the needs of the rural majority, who have been most adversely affected by military rule. At the time, the majority of medical and health care services were concentrated in the centre of the country and in urban areas. Thus the Union's point of departure was one that took into consideration urban/rural and regional variations in the need for health care, a notion that was quite novel at the time.

Beginning as volunteers, using their own vehicles or rented taxis and working during days off and holidays, these original founders began with mobile clinic activities. They would travel to remote areas for a day at a time, assisting people with basic curative services. In the process, they were transformed. Gradual and systematic contact with the deprived majority led to the development of an alternative conception of health and health care. With experience, these health professionals began to realize that, although important, curative services remain limited to palliative treatment of recurrent disease. From practice, from discussion with the population, and as a result of the dialogue that developed, the nature of the operation began to change course.

Perhaps one of the important reasons that allowed for this transformation is that, as the number of volunteers in the Union grew, it incorporated many health professionals who originally came from remote rural areas and refugee camps, thereby providing not only the essential links with communities, but the understanding of the context as well. It should be noted here that during the previous years and until the beginning of the 1970s, the medical profession was predominantly composed of persons from middle class or well-to-do backgrounds who could afford a medical education abroad. What made the conditions different in the late 1960s and early '70s was the scholarship schemes offered to Palestinians, mostly by Eastern European countries, leading to a change in the class nature of the medical profession locally.

As for those health professionals of middle class or urban backgrounds who joined the Union, exposure to the conditions and problems of the rural poor helped in that it allowed them to begin to realize the limitations of curative medicine, and the importance of listening to people and involving them in the solution of their health problems. In other words, from the beginning, links with communities were rather strong, and these served as the bridge by which the Union was transformed, and by which it was able gradually to establish permanent health care centres in different parts of the country, with community involvement as a basis.

1.2. An alternative conception of health and health care

It was these differences that led the Union to pioneer an alternative conception of health and health care services in the country. This alternative conception was based on the notion that health is a social construction:

- that in the end, many of people's health problems can only be solved outside the clinic, through the alleviation of poverty, lack of education and demobilization;
- that health care delivery does have a role in alleviating health problems, but only if it is made appropriate, and dependent first and foremost on the local population's health needs;
- that local people must be actively engaged in the delivery of health care services; and

- that a crucial component in health care work is work within the community, in the homes, and through the building of linkages with the different sectors, such as schools, the women's committee, etc.

Gradually, and as its pool of volunteers expanded, the Union became a major health and social force calling for change. It should be remembered that, at the time, the concept of primary health care was almost unknown in the country. In fact, during the early years, the Union's attempt to reach people with services was met with substantial resistance: these professionals were accused by other professionals of being "barbers" and of the "cheapening of medicine" because they "went to the people instead of the people coming to them". In contrast, the reaction of communities to activities during these initial years were mixed. On the one hand, some communities viewed services delivered to them at their doorstep with suspicion, seeing cheap and affordable treatment which came to the community as second rate. On the other hand, a more prevalent attitude mixed amazement at this new approach with understanding and substantial support: simple people understood, despite the predominant elitist medical ideology that told them otherwise, that a move to their community and their active participation in assisting their community was a step in the right direction, in the direction of serving people. Overall, and despite initial pressures, the Union continued its operations, and gradually increased its pool of volunteers, spreading its activities to the different regions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1.3. A balance between voluntarism and institutionalization

Having surmounted this initial resistance through practice and the reinforcement of links with deprived communities, the Union was able to establish its first permanent health care centre in 1983. At this stage, discussion of the need for permanent human resources to operate clinics began to take shape, in light of the new concepts and the development of the appropriate plans. On the one hand, the voluntary basis of the Union was thought, as it is still today, to constitute the most essential and innovative component of activities, creativity as well as survival. The fact that volunteers served as the main human resource for the operation meant that by the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Union's membership was composed of over 1000 volunteer nurses, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, nutritionists, health researchers, epidemiologists and, later, community health workers, together with about 400 physicians, or about 20% of the total physician population of the country: a substantial social force. That means that the bulk of activities are still performed by unpaid staff at the present day.

However, the gradual development of the Union's permanent health care centres also meant the necessity for partial institutionalization: the recruitment of permanent professional staff, the training of special and new types of staff, the development of necessary administrative and medication procurement structures, the development of a centralized health education unit, and so on. Thus the Union began its gradual and careful structural change towards the establishment of more and more health care centres, always treading the difficult path of maintaining a balance between voluntarism and institutionalization, a key to the success of this experiment.

2. The rationale for the establishment of the Community Health Workers' School

With the development of the permanent health care centre schemes, the need for the training of new types of health care staff emerged. On the one hand, the majority of nurses that could be recruited for work in these centres did not originate from the communities where the centres were to be established. On the other hand, crucial to the conception developed was the active involvement of the community in the process, not only through the development of health committees that could oversee the project in partnership with the Union, but also in terms of local staffing as well. While it was easier to locate physicians from among the communities in question or other nearby ones, it was not possible to find the rest of the team in the communities themselves. This led the Union seriously to consider and eventually to embark on the training of a new human resource: the community health worker.

The Union began by examining the experience of Bethlehem University, which trained community health workers for two years and then phased out the project. An analysis of this useful experience led to the identification of two main, inter-related elements that prevented that programme from being realized in the context in question. Firstly, the programme called for the training of women who had already completed a high school education, within the context of university entrance requirements. However, once in the recruitment phase, it transpired that such women were, and still are, not easy to find at the village level. Because of this difficulty, the programme opted to train men instead, who, in traditional Palestinian society, would generally not be able to enter homes and discuss health with mothers or other women. In the end, these two strategic mistakes, university level entrance, and the gender of the village health worker, combined with other problems, led to the demise of this programme.

However, the Union found it very useful indeed to examine this experiment and learn from its lessons. In this sense, the Bethlehem community health worker experience was put to good use, and must not be seen as a total failure. It was through this experiment that the Union opted from the outset to train women from the community at a non-university level, allowing some to enter the programme even without having completed high school education, and depending on the availability of human resources.

2.1. The implementation phase

The first stage in the implementation of this training scheme — the creation of a new and effective type of human resource — was the development of new concepts for health work, leading to the elaboration of job descriptions and the assigning of tasks for this new health human resource. Perhaps the most important fundamental concept developed was the notion of health work in teams. Up till that time, medical and health care was generally practised by the physician, who made all the decisions, with nurses executing orders. The new Union conception contrasted sharply with this method of operation, in that it relied on the interaction and exchange of team members, including physicians, health workers, nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians in the delivery of primary health care. The second stage entailed a detailed assessment of the skills and concepts that are needed by these community health workers, in order to allow them adequate training for the job in hand. Once those were identified, the long process of curriculum development was initiated. It must be stated here that curricula were not completely developed when the school began its operations. Rather, draft curricula were developed, and with practice, continued to be constantly modified to better suit

a rapidly changing reality. Indeed, until today, in addition to training new health workers, the school has continued to develop new training schemes for its already trained health workers, in an attempt to upgrade skills, and to introduce new programmes evolving out of changing health needs.

2.2. Tasks of the community health workers

Within such a framework, health workers were eventually assigned the following tasks:

- Collection of basic information regarding community health needs and aspirations, and active involvement in the prioritization of local community health needs, including the responsibility for community engagement in the operation of the primary health centre.

- Health education, home visiting and participation in health campaigns. Health education responsibilities include individual and communal discussions with visitors to clinics, and home visiting schemes. Emphasis is placed on preventive and promotional health practices, in addition to the follow-up of patients attending the clinic. Health education is also conducted through community meetings in schools, mosques, village council premises or other places where the community usually meets. Here, discussion of all sorts of problems takes place, and not just health, focusing on the priority list identified by the community members. Often, such activities are supported by the production of health education leaflets, posters and stickers that volunteers from the community distribute to others. Recruiting volunteers for action in health campaigns is another important aspect of health education activities.

- First aid and principles for the basic management of disease, including the follow-up of chronically ill patients.

- Women's health, family planning and maternal and child health. Child health is also a focus of the well baby clinic.

- Care of children through the well baby clinic and school health programmes, and the promotion of good practice for child health. This clinic emphasizes growth monitoring, nutrition follow-up and advice, and the encouragement of breast feeding.

- Care of disabled people through community-based rehabilitation. This is one of the programmes that were recently developed by the Union, specifically since the beginning of the Palestinian Uprising in 1987, which led to the disablement of many young people as a result of army violence. In this project, every attempt is made to integrate the disabled within their communities by helping to make the immediate environment accessible to disabled people, whether at home, in the school or at work. Moreover, this social integration focus also entails vigorous educational campaigns and role model building aimed at reducing the stigma attached to disability in Palestinian society. This model is also based on the widest possible use of local resources to assist in the solution of the physical, social and psychological problems of disabled people.

- Performance of basic nursing duties through work in health centres and home visits.

- Work in programmes for the early detection of disease, such as screening programmes for the detection of cervical and breast cancer, diabetes, hypertension and anemia.

- Management of the health centre and participation in drawing up work plans and their implementation.

2.3. The gradual legitimization of the role of women as health workers

Because of the generally low status that women are afforded in Palestinian society, especially rural areas, and because of the lower level of education of these women, it was not easy to carve a legitimate place for health workers as carers in the community. In most traditional societies where women do not work outside the domestic sphere, the engagement of women in such a public role can only earn legitimacy gradually, as the new role model proves successful. The Union recognized this limitation from the outset, and proceeded to support these women diplomatically, in very gradual ways. For instance, when the first village health committees were established, the Union did not insist on having health workers represented on these all-male committees: had they insisted, they would probably have failed. In addition, it would have negatively affected the relationship of the Union to the local male power structures.

However, as health workers began to provide actual services to the population, their popularity and level of appreciation by the local community began to rise. This led to the gradual confidence-building required for these women to begin gradually to penetrate the world of men. In time, when health workers felt ready, and with the support of the Union, they began to attend village health committee meetings. In time, many became integral members of these committees, and some reached the level of being perceived as community leaders. Others lagged behind, depending on the abilities of the health worker, the community support system and level of development in each of the communities. It must also be remembered that because these women were offered paid work, their status within the family and the community rose, as they became breadwinners, with some of their wages going to support their families. Overall, however, today, the new role model of women health workers has become well established in all of the communities where the Union works. Moreover, this new role for women has become part of the routine of delivering health services in most of the country.

2.4. Why is the experience innovative?

In other words, there are clearly four aspects to the innovation pioneered by the School: firstly, one that deals with re-constructing the notion of health and health care; secondly, one that deals with the development of new human resources working within the health care sector; thirdly, one that links health care provision to local communities and their active participation in health care delivery; and fourthly, one that has developed a new role model for rural women with modest education in public life.

3. The training course

3.1. Selection of students

Selection begins with the primary health care centre team encouraging different local women to apply to the course, on the basis of certain selected criteria, including acceptability by the community, at least 10 years of education, interest in health care delivery, personal characteristics, and willingness to learn and become an active member of the team. Usually, the local committee is informed about the upcoming course, and together, Union staff and local committee work on identifying possible applicants. This process takes time as it involves consultation with the different groups and sections within a community. Once the applications are in, priority is given to women coming from rural areas, particularly those in deprived regions of the country. The students are then chosen through a series of interviews, with the participation of a special admissions committee, composed of people from within and outside the Union. This committee is guided by the criteria developed by the Union. It should be mentioned here that the most important criteria for selection include personal attributes, capacity for development and community activities.

During the selection process, the approximate age and academic level of the applicants are taken into consideration. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, but not more than 30. Although the Union continues to prefer that those admitted should have earned their high school diploma, this continues to be a very flexible criterion, and depends largely on the availability of women from the particular community with better education. These criteria are important, as the gradual building of experience in training has revealed that comparable educational backgrounds allow for better homogeneity in learning and improved performance. Moreover, experience has also shown that younger women are more eager and willing to learn new skills. Younger women have expressed more willingness to restructure concepts and attitudes, when needed.

3.2. Course duration and content

Each of the training sessions takes one year to complete. Training is divided into two general sections: theoretical and practical skills, and concept acquisition. The curriculum is divided into modules, in which theoretical training in the classroom setting and pertaining to a particular subject is completed, after which the trainees are immediately sent to the different health centres to receive the practical training. Theoretical and practical training are always linked to each other and to basic social, educational, economic and communication knowledge and skills in order to produce holistic understanding and practice in primary health care.

3.3. Curriculum

The training curriculum is divided into five main modules:

- Nursing skills: anatomy and physiology; principles of managing a health centre;
- Community activities, communication skills, health education and environmental health;

- Women's health, mother and child health, and family planning;

- Management of diseases, control of communicable diseases and emergency care; and

- Care for special groups, including community based rehabilitation for disabled people, care for the elderly, school health, vocational training, oral health and eye health care.

Through these components, other very important subjects are introduced. Such subjects include Palestinian society and culture, indigenous medical practices, in which students are taught the benefits of some practices and the dangers of others, nutrition, rational use of medications, principles of mathematics and basic English. Note that the basic English and mathematical training is linked to the medical and health skills that the trainees need to learn at a later stage.

Following each theoretical module, the trainees carry out field training, which is aimed at allowing all of the students to practise in the health centre and the community, within the realtity of daily work, what they have learned in the classroom. Such training is done under the supervision of primary health care teams in the different health centres, with the support of the School's teaching staff. Each training session takes between three and five weeks to complete, depending on the topic.

3.4. The teaching staff

While there are two persons employed to operate and manage the School, the large majority of the trainers are volunteers, from within and outside the Union. University lecturers, psychologists, sociologists, communication specialists, physicians, nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians, among others, all contribute to the training. Although every emphasis is placed on participatory training, because of the wide variety of trainers, the level of participatory training varies somewhat, depending on the trainers' abilities and the subject. Different methods are used in an inter-related way: lectures, workshops, presentations, group work, observation, demonstrations and field work are all part of the training package. Teaching aides are used effectively, including videotapes, slide presentations and board demonstrations, all important tools for community health work. Nursing and first aid skills, as well as other types of skills, are taught using models and equipment under direct supervision.

Although the School has been operating for ten years, and has graduated 123 health workers so far — with 90 continuing to work in the various Union programmes — it is only during the past three or four years that experienced community health workers have begun to teach at the School. Combining experience and competence, selected health workers are very much part of the core training team, allowing their experience to be transferred in an active form to the new students.

3.5. School supervision

A special committee supervises the School's educational activities and training. The committee includes representatives of the teaching staff, the management structure of the Union, and volunteer experts in the fields of primary health care and public health. The Committee's role includes the monitoring of the students in the classrooms and their field

training. Moreover, the committee is responsible for supporting the new graduates during the initial phase of their work as members of primary health care teams just after graduation. It is here that much of the support for these women is provided, until confidence is built up and membership legitimized within the team and the community.

3.6. Student evaluation process

The evaluation of students includes a number of methods: classroom participation, notable achievement and initiative during field training, and classical forms of evaluation such as monthly tests and a final examination. This examination is divided into three parts: written, oral and practical. A special committee composed of the School staff and representatives of the Union's management structure supervises the final examination.

It should be noted here that the Union's understanding of evaluation rests on the idea that evaluation is very much part of the educational process. It is needed in order to reveal the students' conceptual and practical weaknesses, so that appropriate methods of support can be provided to overcome these weak points.

3.7. Eligibility for admission to the School

Until recently, the School catered almost solely to the Union's needs for health workers. However, because of demand, the School has recently started training health workers for other institutions. As it is the only institution effectively training health workers at this intensive level, an increasing number of health institutions have been requesting that the Union provide training to their staff. In such situations, health institutions usually pay the full fees, including the expenses incurred in using the dormitory during the training period. As for Union trainees, they do not pay any fees. However, they are required to make a commitment to work with the Union for two years after graduation.

3.8. Other training schemes

The School also holds special training courses in various fields of community work, in coordination with a number of Union programmes. Such courses include:

- A three-month course in community-based rehabilitation of disabled people. This training programme meets the standards adopted by the World Health Organization, although the course content is modified and adapted to suit the local setting. Once training is completed, the rehabilitation workers then join the community-based rehabilitation programme of the Union. Activities in this programme focus on visiting the homes of disabled people and assisting them and their families in coping with daily living, and in becoming integrated as far as possible into society, attending normal schools, and family, social and communal activities. In addition, a special focus is given to assisting the disabled in training for employment and in finding paid work. This programme is still rather new, one of the first of its kind in the country, and constitutes another innovative experience in service provision and community mobilization for action.

- Continuing education courses aimed at updating and improving the knowledge and skills of community health workers in a number of fields, including women's health, child care, care of patients with chronic diseases, school health promotion and other subjects.

- Training community health workers and other health professionals to conduct health campaigns, such as the campaign for the control of diarrheal diseases among children, management of children with acute respiratory infections, breast feeding promotion and other such campaigns.

- Training courses in surveys and health research.

- Training to meet emerging needs on demand, or for the development of new programmes. Such training includes testing water for quality, and how to deal with water contamination. This training is linked to community awareness campaigns, in which community health workers actively participate by mobilizing volunteers, collecting water samples for testing and raising public awareness of the importance of keeping the environment clean.

4. Summary and conclusion

Pioneering a first project of its kind, the Union embarked on initiating and operating a community health workers' school that still continues to develop new concepts, ideas and knowledge. Beginning with re-thinking health and health care, away from the biomedical model and adopting the notion of the social construction of health and disease, the Union built its model for the creation of new types of human resources, based on the principle of community mobilization and action, in participation with professionals and grassroots community activists. The experiment brought about new concepts and practice in health work that have been having an impact at a country-wide level: while the first trained health workers met with very serious resistance among the medical professionals in the country, today health workers are acknowledged as an important pillar of primary health care provision. These new concepts and practices have earned credibility over the years, mainly because of the success in implementing the model at the community level.

At this stage, this innovative project operates on the basis of an interaction between the smaller local communities and the Union, which is a member of the larger community. As a non-governmental organization composed of many members who come from rural and deprived communities, the Union itself is nonetheless part of the smaller community that aspires to improve its health conditions. As a voluntary organization composed of different types of health care human resources, from different classes and different regions, the Union is integrally linked to the smaller communities with which it shares its programmes. It is precisely this integral link and interaction that have brought about the success story of the School and the Union: Union members are part of these small communities; they provide the information needed for the interaction; they provide the bridge required for the development of programmes; and they enlighten the Union regarding communities and community life.

Needless to say, any and all communities are, by definition, heterogeneous. Thus when one discusses "the community", one must also specify "who within the small community one is talking about". The Union and the School are among those members of the smaller communities who call for change, for the alternative, for the improvement of the majority of people's health, for the demystification of medical and health knowledge, and for the social participation of the largest number of people possible, especially the deprived, such as women, the disabled and the poor elements.

In this sense, and although the Union and the School provide services to all, regardless of gender, creed, status or wealth, the Union, its staff and volunteers continue to work for health care delivery and community participation in the belief that health is a fundamental human right. It operates on the principle of gradually assisting in the democratization of society and small communities, through health care work, through the inclusion of the deprived in participatory schemes, exactly as it has succeeded in doing in the case of women health workers joining local health committees.

Democratization, the move to a civil society and the integration of concepts related to fundamental human rights for all, do not and cannot descend on people in a vacuum. For many years, Palestinian society has been dominated by one form of aggressor or another: first it was the Turks during the 16th century, then it was the British, then the Jordanians and then Israeli military rule. Within such a political context over the centuries, people's daily experience has taught them that the public good is not in their interest, precisely because the public is controlled by the aggressor. Within such conditions, notions of democratization and human rights are very difficult, if not impossible, to conceptualize or realize.

However, specific political and social circumstances have led Palestinians to the path of grassroots, community-level action, which has consequently led different sectors of the population, especially women and young poeple, to realize their potential power. The Union and the School are a manifestation of this type of consciousness. Today, this consciousness, through health work and the innovative training of new types of human resources, is also being utilized to assist people in understanding what concepts such as human rights and democracy have to offer them. The gradual legitimization of the role of women health workers is only one of the many examples that the Union has developed at the local level, with an important impact not only on health care work, but also on the notion of local control. To this end, the School and the Union are proving to be working in the right direction.

KENYAN EXPERIENCE ON TRAINING ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

Khalfan A. Mazrui

Mombasa, Kenya

1. Background to the Adult Education Teacher Training Course

The Adult Education Teacher Training Course (AETTC) was launched in 1984 by the Department of Adult Education in collaboration with the Department of Distance Studies of the University of Nairobi, Kikuyu Campus, as an innovative project covering the whole country.

The course draws its objectives from the national goals of education, which are to create a nation free from hunger, disease and ignorance, and to offer more equal access to educational opportunities. AETTC is conceived as an educational programme which will play an interventionist role in the empowerment of disadvantaged and underprivileged groups in society, especially women.

AETTC borrowed the method of distance education from the Inservice Course of Training Primary School Teachers (ITPST), which was a methodological breakthrough adopted to accelerate human resource development. The new programme was designed as a strategy to train adult educators by means of distance education. It was specifically organised for adult educators who are already employed and teaching adult classes.

The model adopted by AETTC distinguishes between functions that are centralised for the purpose of effective co-ordination and those that are localised and are assumed to give learners control of the educational process. The *centralised functions* are the production of study materials, marking of assignments and training of part-time tutors and writers. The *localised services* at zonal levels are the face-to-face sessions, the assessment of learning needs and teaching practice, the development of a relevant curriculum for learners in the form of primers, and the establishment of linkages and networking with the change agents.

1.1. The National Literacy Campaign

On 1st January 1965, the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, directed that adult education was to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. As a result of the directive, a new Division of Adult Education was established in the Ministry of Education. The creation of this division was done without a clear vision of its objectives, structure and role in nation-building, or of the theoretical framework within which the programme of adult education was going to be built.

A massive literacy campaign was declared, aiming at eradicating illiteracy in the country by the year 1983. Many literacy classes shot up throughout the country; 3,000 full-time and 5,000 part-time literacy teachers were recruited to manage these classes.

In the same year (1983), a new Department of Adult Education (DAE) was established. The newly formed department had a crop of seasoned adult educators who forged a new vision of adult education that would enhance people's capacities as individuals and groups to improve

their own lives and to take greater control of their own destinies. The basic component of this vision was the concept of *functional literacy*.

On the basis of UNESCO's definition,[1] a functional literacy programme would need to have the following characteristics:

- needs orientation
- links between the programme and the economic, social, political and cultural context of the community
- conscientisation and mobilisation to make learners aware of their situation, problems and potential
- integration of the "3R's" with acquisition of knowledge and skills related to life in order to improve the quality of life.

1.2. Initial constraints on the implementation of the National Literacy Campaign

The programme envisaged was not just literacy but *functional literacy*. The focus and thrust of the programme was human capacitation. The programme had to be directly linked with the economic activities of the community, and yet the instructional objectives were to be comprehensive enough to include skills that would help learners to participate fully in the socio-political life of the community. Ideally, the integration of literacy and economic skills should be so organic that the learner would not be aware of whether he or she was learning literacy or economic skills.

The 3,000 teachers who were to be the main actors in this programme had only hazy ideas of the conceptual framework underpinning "functional literacy". They considered literacy to be just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (the 3R's). In fact, this is what they were teaching in their literacy classes. There was therefore the need to *reorient and socialise* this cohort of teachers in order for them to initiate and participate effectively in functional literacy projects.

The adult education teachers were to be given a salary structure similar to primary school teachers if their academic entry levels were the same. The 3,000 teachers were composed of a) O-level holders, who would train as T1s (teacher one, equal in status to P1 [Primary school teacher one]); b) T2s, who had completed high school education but had not achieved an O-level certificate, and would be equated to P2; and c) T3s, who had successfully completed primary school education, and would be equated to P3s. This was a DAE recommendation to the Government so that the teachers would see themselves in a professional career structure.

Implicit in the concept of training was the process of *curriculum development*. Would the curriculum be rigorous enough to equate these teachers with comparable primary school teachers so that they deserved a similar career structure and status? Would they be recognised by the community as professional adult education teachers?

---

[1] Functionally illiterate is "a person who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (20th General Conference 1978).

1.3. The origin of the innovation

In this case study, innovation is understood to mean the art of the possible within a particular context. It therefore implies:

- learning to recognise and respond to the existence of a problem
- defining the problem
- breaking out of old patterns and routines of dealing with problems
- being flexible in order to suit different environments and cultures
- looking outside the immediate context for inspiration as to what is possible and for insights into ways of doing what is possible
- using information and creativity as resources to do what is possible.

The crux of the matter as far as innovation is concerned is empowerment and change.

Using this model of innovation, AETTC did not have to re-invent the wheel. There was already an Inservice Teacher Training Course (ITTC) which used an innovative methodology. Distance education as a delivery system had proved very successful in solving the perennial problem of training a large and growing number of unqualified primary school teachers in Kenya. This programme had proved sustainable because of a learning strategy that highly valued students' independence and autonomy, of the material benefit offered (professional training for a teacher career) and of the creation of self-confidence among learners and recognition of their professional roles in the community. The programme had acquired local roots and had convinced educationalists of its transferability to other teacher training programmes for unqualified teachers.

1.4. What was learned from the original innovation

The ITTC programme had benefited from:

- a small unit or department of not more than 8 academic members of staff, later reduced to 3 staff training 6,000 teachers (compared with 22 Primary Teachers Colleges with not less than 320 academic staff training 5,384 teachers)
- an efficient administrative structure that liaised closely with co-operating bodies: the Ministry of Education, the Kenya Institution of Education, the Kenya National Examination Council and Voice of Kenya
- continuous evaluation built into the programme giving constant feedback
- training of part-time tutors and course writers in tutoring distance education students, and producing effective distance education materials
- an efficient student support service, producing study units, keeping and retrieving students' records, counselling students, and training and utilising part-time tutors
- production of students' study materials one year in advance
- adequate funds on a regular basis to meet the budgetary requirements of the programme
- the use of the postal service where this was efficient, and identification of convenient distribution points for students' study materials, and
- a memorandum of agreement between the sponsoring organisation and the training institution on the responsibilities of each party.

The programme spearheaded the training of 3,000 untrained adult education teachers who were recruited to eliminate illiteracy in Kenya within a period of ten years.

2. The Adult Education Teacher Training Course

2.1. The curriculum of AETTC

The elaboration of the curriculum presented the biggest problem. The Kenya Institute of Education, which is a Ministry of Education Curriculum Centre charged with producing official syllabuses from early childhood to post-secondary education, had no panel for developing an adult education curriculum. There was, however, a curriculum at the College of Education and External Studies which was offered to students who wanted to do a certificate course on adult education (the "Foundation in Adult Education").

This course had eight areas of study: Introduction to Adult Education, History and Development of Adult Education in Kenya, Psychology of Adult Education, Human Relations and Communications Skills, Curriculum Development, Adult Education Methods, Kiswahili, and Effective Evaluation for Adult Education.

The curriculum had also to be compared and equated with the training offered at the Primary Teachers Colleges in terms of content coverage, depth and relevance. It was an enormous task. It took more than two years to be finalised and approved. The eight courses were the same but the content of each study area was broadened and deepened. Due to this long delay in approving the curriculum, the production of study units took a much longer time than anticipated.

2.2. Refinement of the course

The study materials had to undergo further adjustment in structure and presentation. The syllabus was structured into manageable areas of study organised in a hierarchical order. Each area formed a coherent unit of study. Several learning theories were adopted to improve the presentation of these correspondence units[2].

---

[2] Skinner's" behavior control" model was used to formulate learning objectives at the beginning of each unit; Ausubel's "advance organiser" model was used to structure presentation of materials starting from the most general and then moving to specific details; Egan's "structural communication" model, which advocates presentation of small doses of information and testing the learners' understanding of this information, was followed by providing self-tests after every section of the unit; and Gagnes' "general teaching" model, which advocates hierarchical learning, was used in the units by starting with simple concepts and moving on to more complex ones. Burner's "discovery learning" model was used to specify learning experiences that learners had to go through in instructional objectives. These were given at the beginning of every unit; Carl Rogers' "facilitation" model is based on the need to facilitate knowledge rather than teach it in the traditional sense. This was applied by:

- writing text in a friendly manner addressing the learner directly
- commenting on written assignments instructively and in a positive friendly manner.

It was supported by Holmberg's "theory of didactic conversation", which suggests that effective two-way communication must be established in the unit through written assignments. In effect, this really means talking to the student directly by referring to 'you' instead of using an impersonal text-book style of presentation.

These units were written in a workshop setting using the Action Training Model (ATM), whereby study units were followed by practical exercises. The units written step by step by the participants were taken at the end of the first workshop for pre-testing. The participants met again for an editing workshop. Usable results of the pre-testing were incorporated in the units and the group editing of these units began. It is at these workshops that illustrations for the units were suggested and pasted in.

2.3. The curriculum and the mode of delivery

The programme consisted of two components. The first component was *individual study*. The curriculum covered eight subjects split into a number of units over the three-year duration of the course. The number of units in each subject varied. There was a big debate on this matter but members of the panel argued that the content of each subject was based on the needs of the learners and what was thought to be a required level of competence for this potential cadre of teachers. Table 1 shows the distribution of units per subject.

Table 1. Distribution of units per subject

Subject area	Number of units	Number of units to be offered in each year		
		1st	2nd	3rd
Introduction to Adult Education	5	2	2	1
History and Development of Adult Education in Kenya	4	1	1	2
Psychology of Adult Education	5	1	2	2
Human Relations and Communications Skills	6	2	2	2
Curriculum Development	8	3	3	2
Adult Education Methods	4	1	1	2
Kiswahili	5	2	2	1
Effective Evaluation for Adult Education	4	2	1	1
Total	**41**	**14**	**14**	**13**

It can be seen from the table that Curriculum Development has eight study units while Adult Education Methods, Evaluation and Kiswahili have four units each.

The Kiswahili course appears to have presented special difficulties to non-Bantu tribes. It has four units but the course content assumes a basic level of competency as a pre-requisite. It was assumed that since Kiswahili is our national language, a language of inter-ethnic

communication and the language of commerce, most people have a basic knowledge. This assumption was very far from the truth.[3]

The second component consisted of the *face-to-face sessions* with no specific content. Two to three weeks annually are spent in going over the content of the curriculum and sorting out students' academic and administrative problems. This also gives an opportunity to students and their course tutors to share their hopes and worries.

Radio lessons play a supportive role. They supplement, enrich and highlight correspondence materials, give a daily human touch between the students and the providing body and attempt also to deal with administrative and counselling issues.[4] *Audio cassettes* instead of radio lessons would appear to be a desirable innovation. Audio cassettes could be played at learners' convenience as often as required, could be stopped at any point for reflective and digestive purposes, and could form library resource materials for learners. However, the cost of implementing this would be prohibitive to the students. Each student would have to acquire a cassette player and all the audio cassettes for the course. These teacher trainees earn relatively low wages.

2.4. *Power relationships of the collaborating institutions*

At this point, it is important to examine the power relationships between the collaborating institutions in order to have some perspective on the achievements of the programme. The institutions are:

- the Department of Adult Education (DAE)
- the Department of Distance Studies (DDS)
- the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE)
- the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)
- the Department of Personnel Management (DPM)

The DPM controls enrolment. It directs how many positions can be established under permanent conditions of service. In this sense it dictates the number of students that can be

---

3 A very small sample of learners from non-Bantu tribes who are doing the course (9T1, 9T2, and 9T3) were interviewed. Here is the summary of what they said:
* The course is difficult as it moves fast from one section to the other. It makes too many assumptions about the teachers.
* The course should be made longer but have easy steps.
* The course must not assume that every one of us has a basic knowledge of Kiswahili.
* We will read Fasihi (literature books) ourselves if we master the language. Teach us to master the language first. Literature should not be included in the Kiswahili course.

4 Radio lessons, however, have obvious limitations:
* They are on the air at a fixed time of the day: once missed, they are lost for ever.
* Reception in some parts of the country is normally poor and the lessons are therefore inaudible.
* Dialogue or discussion with the learners is not possible.

enrolled annually. The DDS trains those students who are recommended by DAE on the advice given by DPM.

The KIE develops the curriculum on the basis of the national goals of education, which among other things aim at preserving Kenya's cultural heritage and at rural development. It tries to accommodate the needs of the target group in the context of the national aspirations and agenda.

The KNEC has to check that the curriculum developed can produce the quality products desired and is comparable with a curriculum that produces similar products. The Adult Education Teachers Curriculum was therefore subjected to rigorous scrutiny when compared with the Inservice Programme of Primary School Teachers. The whole exercise assumed the intricacies of power broking. During the two years which it took for the curriculum to be officially endorsed, a number of learners dropped out because of uncertainty over the future. Fortunately, it was not a mass protest. People were looking for job security. This was one of the teething problems of the innovation resulting, as it were, from very slow decision-making.

2.5. Operational zones

The original programme used the postal service to mail study materials and assignments to students. A number of problems were experienced. Some study materials got lost and quite a number of them were unclaimed because they were wrongly addressed. In some cases there were some long delays in receiving mail. To surmount all these problems operational zones and zonal committees were constituted.

Zonal committees are responsible for:

- overall co-ordination of the programme so that the student has an accessible centre in his immediate environment to sort out all his or her learning problems
- ensuring that all course materials from DDS and any other information from KIE, DAE or KNEC reach the trainee on time
- ensuring that internal practical teaching assessment is carried out at the end of the course and that the grades are forwarded to DAE
- ensuring that the external assessors reach the trainees for the final practical teaching assessment
- organising the centres for the final examinations.

This mechanism was built into the programme to effect a smooth and efficient two-way communication between the student and the teaching institution. It is vital that the student receives study material and feedback on marked assignments promptly. In most Third World countries, the postal service is not efficient. Where road communication is reliable, as in Kenya, study materials could be efficiently delivered by road to students' study centres. From the study centres, zonal centres or sub-zonal centres, students could collect their materials.

2.6. Distribution of students according to gender

There is a significant gender imbalance in favour of male teachers: 1,700 male adult education teachers, compared with 790 female, i.e., 31.7% female teachers and 68.3% male. There is

therefore a need to correct this gender imbalance. The female population must not feel left out of national developmental strategies.

2.7. Final assessment of the course

The course assessment has three components. Continuous assessment accounts for 30% of the final mark. This is an aggregate mark worked out from three written assignments in each of the eight subjects. This assessment is carried out by DDS and DAE.[5]

The second component is a final practical teaching assessment conducted by internal and external assessors. The assessment involves observation of the teacher trainee three times during the course, twice by internal assessors and once by an external assessor, towards the end of the course. The trainee must pass this part. It is crucial as it assesses the trainee's ability to put into practice what he or she has learnt in empowering the students.

There are 200 Assistant Adult Education Officers (AAEOs) of the DAE who serve as internal assessors. Each internal assessor handles about 15 teachers. A common assessment form is used by the assessors.

There are usually 35 external assessors. These are jointly appointed by the DAE and the Ministry of Education. Before a final grade for each student is submitted to DAE, the internal and external assessors will meet to harmonise their grades.

A final examination at the end of the three-year course is conducted every year by the Kenya National Examinations Council. Students are examined in all eight subjects. This written examination accounts for 70% of the final score. A candidate must also pass this section (with a mark of 40% or above). The final examination consists of the following four papers:

Paper I	Concepts, policy and development of adult education in Kenya (2 hrs. 15 mins)
Paper II	Psychology, human relations and communications and methods (2 hrs. 15 mins)
Paper III	Curriculum development and evaluation of adult education (2 hrs. 15 mins)
Paper IV	(A) Kiswahili language (1 hr. 30 mins)
	(B) Kiswahili literature (1 hr. 30 mins)

2.8. Accreditation

To be awarded the Adult Education Teachers Certificate a candidate must:

- fulfil the entry requirements
- be in continuous adult classroom teaching during the three years of the course
- pass in practical teaching
- reach a satisfactory general standard as judged by the candidate's aggregate performance in the best six subjects.

---

[5] Face-to-face sessions and radio lessons do not carry valid marks for the purpose of certification.

Candidates failing to meet the requirements for the award of the certificate are allowed to repeat either the examination in the subject in which they failed or practical teaching or both.[6]

2.9. *Budget for the course*

The money actually spent in local currency (Kenya shillings) may not make much sense to outsiders since the cost of items varies from place to place. Prices also fluctuate within the country, and the purchasing power of the shilling has been badly eroded over the last four years. However, some guide is offered by the fact that the budget shown in Table 2 would not be adequate to run a moderately equipped high school for one year.

Table 2. Summary of the budget (for 3 years)

Registration of trainees	16,500.00
Mode of delivery (study units, part-timetutors and writers, face-to-face sessions and radio)	5,399,610.00
Field officers	809,000.00
Reference materials	135,580.00
Practical teaching assessment	3,418,560.00
Monitoring and advisory services	3,765,600.00
Programme review	231,200.00
	14,007,050.00

A US dollar had been fluctuating between 42 and 56 Kenya shillings. Taking the lowest value of the shilling, this budget would reflect an expenditure of $ 333,501.18. If we take the highest value, this would be $ 250,125.83.

The delivery system of the course has been responsible for keeping down costs considerably. The programme relies mostly on part-time staff and borrowed school facilities for face-to-face teaching for both the teacher trainees and learners in the literacy classes.

3. Some results

Table 3 shows how well AETTC students have performed recently. The results for 1992 were characterised by a number of referred cases and absenteeism. Failures have been relatively low, less than 25% in each year. Absentees are candidates who have been unable to do the examination due to sickness, motor accidents or attendance at funerals of relatives. Referred

[6] In most examinations, a candidate is not allowed to accumulate grades but has to repeat the whole examination if he or she has failed the number of subjects required. In this examination, a candidate is allowed to accumulate grades until the requirements for the award of a certificate are met.

cases represent 30.2% of the total number of candidates. Referred cases usually have to resit one or two subjects.

Table 3. Performance of AETTC students from 1991 to 1993

Year	No. registered	No. passed	No. referred	No. absent	No. failed	%pass	%fail
1991	522	279	171	0	60	53.4	11.4
1992	674	284	214	22	114	42.3	17.3
1993	1075	387	339	52	182	37.7	16.9
Total	**2271**	**950**	**724**	**74**	**356**	**41.03**	**11.22**

Most of these candidates do not have a tidy room in which to study. They try to make use of any available empty space such as an unused classroom, an office, a social hall, the shade of a tree, a bedroom or a living room. They are highly motivated because for them the course represents an opportunity to develop a career which they do not want to lose. They are also motivated by their colleagues who have successfully completed the course and are earning much higher salaries than their meagre ones. One obvious assistance that could be given to this group of learners is a short course on how to study. Most of them have been out of school for more then ten years.

The DAE is determined to give qualified adult education teachers who have shown commitment to the programme a career structure for upward mobility. This applies to those learners who have outclassed others in the field by organising and sustaining functional literacy classes. They have been promoted to positions of supervisors.

4. Problems in implementation and new insights

Innovation inevitably brings with it problems of change and acceptance. People normally like to preserve their traditions. It is difficult to introduce the dynamics of change into groups and to develop structures which will make an innovation sustainable.

Training adult education teachers through distance education did raise many questions of acceptability. There was the question of the suitability of the curriculum, which took two years to resolve. There was also the question of how this curriculum could be tested and its results compared with other similar programmes. This took more than a year to sort out. There was the final question of the status of the teachers when they qualified. This was probably the hardest question, and it took more than four years to reach a solution.

In sorting out all these intricate and interwoven questions, the students were thoroughly confused. They did not know what was going on. This was the time when the DAE lost about 50 out of the 3,000 teachers.

A wind of change has brought in a new climate, a new willingness to accept the innovation. The programme has been accepted by all government ministries. The extension workers are involving adult education teachers in planning and implementing educational activities in the field. Adult education teachers are also members of local District Development Committees. A spirit of co-operation has been established.

The national functional literacy campaign has been given a new lease of life. It has increased the frequency of activities and has energised the teachers to focus more sharply on learners as the change agents. Learners are now able to see the difference in performance between the three categories of teachers in the field, namely qualified full-time teachers, part-time teachers and self-help teachers.

It is generally true to say that classes managed by full-time teachers attract more learners than those managed by the other categories. Learners are generally more motivated by the functional aspect of literacy than other aspects. Full-time teachers are better equipped to develop and run functional literacy classes. Their performance in the field has been satisfying and appreciated by the DAE officers in the field, as well as by members of the public who participate in the rural development projects. However, the efforts of these teachers could be dissipated if a well-devised scheme of service is not implemented.

In this programme there are also part-time teachers, who are probably more than double the number of full-time teachers. Their contribution in the field of functional literacy and literacy in general has been greater than that of the full-time teachers because of the sheer numbers of classes which they manage.

These part-timers need to be brought into the fold of full-time teachers through training and appropriate remuneration. Many of them have worked for many years in the field and have no other employment. The meagre wages that they earn are very little on which to make ends meet. They are beginning to feel left out, and this is bound to affect their morale and standard of teaching unless their wages are increased.

The third cadre of teachers are self-help teachers. There are few of these, but they should be encouraged to do the course if they wish to. They are not teaching for monetary gain but basically as their contribution to nation-building. It is a rare but commendable spirit of benevolence and philanthropy, and needs to be positively rewarded.

There is also a need to inject enough funds into the programme to increase its impact and effectiveness. There are several areas of great need:

- Supervision at the moment is very weak because of lack of transport. There are no vehicles and when they are available there is no money for fuel. Field Officers were once given motor bikes. These have been withdrawn because of their poor state.

- Zonal reading rooms need to be established, equipped with radio cassette players and small libraries.

- Funds need to be made available for training and part-time teachers need to be absorbed into full-time employment.

- Production of localised primers should reflect more closely the specific needs of the target groups.

- Face-to-face sessions need to be more frequent than once a year. These are the only forums that facilitate contact between students and teachers.

- Audio programmes should replace radio lessons. There is need for creativity in the production of the programmes. Learners should be involved. Students would need to be assisted in acquiring cassette players and audio cassettes.

- Evaluation of the programmes should be conducted at national, zonal and district levels. Evaluation workshops could be revived to train supervisors and other evaluators to be more effective in this task. The results of the evaluation could be fed back into the programme to make it more effective and meaningful to the learners.

5. Conclusions: Lessons learnt

From an analysis of AETTC we have learnt that:

- It was necessary for the donors of the original innovation to bring their team and stay with those adopting the innovation for enough time to mobilise, organise, train and establish links with local collaborating institutions, local leaderships and bureaucracies.

- This innovation started from the failure to satisfy a national need by conventual educational methods. So that it could be adopted and developed, the Kenyan context had to be taken into account, making it necessary to perform transactions with other systems in the country.

- The innovation borrowed by AETTC had a 26-year history of development and elaboration and yet it did not have clear causality, certainty and prediction at the theoretical level or a set of exact steps to be taken at the practical level. The adopters of the innovation had to reshape and revitalise it so that it responded to the emerging needs of the desired change and the real-life contexts of the learners.

- The whole process of reconstructing and revitalising the innovation was gradual, and was brought about through participatory planning with functionaries of the organisations at various levels, and with feedback from the field, which was taken into account in reviewing the outcomes in relation to the objectives of the innovation.

- Participatory evaluation of the innovation by all the parties concerned, at the levels of experimentation, implementation and diffusion, is necessary for purposes of both improvement and validation.

- There is a need to establish another level of formal and informal links between the actors, both horizontally and vertically, in order to improve communications.

- The sustainability of the innovation depends on the resources available for the planners to promote it as well as on cognitive resources such as knowledge and relevant social, scientific, pedagogical, planning and evaluation skills. It also needs institutional support from the planning to the diffusion stage in addition to political and community support.

CAFAM'S CONTINUING ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM (CAFAED): A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

María Auxiliadora Consuegra G.

CAFAM
Santafé de Bogotá D.C., Colombia

CAFAED sees adult education as a strategy for human development, which is the basis of socio-economic development. Human development is focused on cultivating the potential of the human being in every domain. Therefore, development is not limited to intellectual growth, but extends to the affective and social domains as well.

The educational process in this project is conceived to be a pedagogy for development. This is understood as a dynamic process of learning to learn, learning to think, self-guided learning and communication. The dynamics are generated by interaction between the participants in small groups, together with a learning facilitator who sets all of the elements of the curriculum in motion in a flexible and non-formal structure that respects each participant's pace of learning.

The process is not organized by grades, but is spaced along a continuum of structured learning by stages and levels of competency. Small-group study sessions are held, and independent study at home is the basis for each individual's active participation in the small group.

After 14 years of operation, the program has expanded its coverage from 270 participants during the first year to 39,448 in 1994. It is now used in 26 of the 32 departments (i.e., provinces or states) in Colombia.

1. Adult education programs in Colombia

In the decades before the project was launched, some important developments in the area of adult education could be observed. Among them were formal night schools for secondary education (created in 1952) and for primary education (created in 1970). In 1957 the *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (National Apprenticeship Service, SENA) was founded with the purpose of providing occupational training to workers. *Acción Cultural Popular* (Popular Cultural Action, ACPO), created in 1943 by the private sector with the financial support of the Colombian Goverment, carried out literacy and extension programs.

In the 1970s, various popular education programs sponsored by private institutions emerged. They were intended to increase adults' awareness of their exploited and isolated

condition[1] so that they would develop class consciousness[2] with a view to the creation and consolidation of a popular front.[3]

During the '80s, the Colombian Government organized a new literacy campaign, the Simón Bolívar Campaign (1980-1982), which was followed later by the CAMINA Campaign (1984-1986).

1.1. Constraints identified within the existing programs

The majority of the existing programs concentrated only on one or, at best, a few dimensions of the human being. For some programs, the objective was to teach how to read and write. Others prepared adults for jobs, while still others sought to politically indoctrinate participants so that the adult learners would become part of a confrontation with the forces in power.

Other programs retained the same content for many years without realizing that the country had changed. Social, economic and political conflicts have led to increased urbanization. The modernization of some rural production sectors, and the introduction of technology, have placed new demands on people. Low educational levels in the cities and the country have intensified the marginal status of some groups, which have been excluded from job opportunities. Finally, people's expectations have risen, so that they are now more likely to claim their rights and opportunities. The literacy campaigns have produced very poor results, both in terms of coverage in relation to the budget spent, and meaningful changes in people's living conditions.

2. Origin of CAFAED

2.1. The agency in which the innovation was born: CAFAM

The innovation was conceived within the context of a private non-profit enterprise, the *Caja de Compensación Familiar* (Family Subsidy Fund, CAFAM). CAFAM is one of a group of organizations that were established in 1957 when the Colombian Government instituted a form of social benefit called the Family Subsidy. Under this law, all companies or employers must affiliate their employees to a Family Subsidy Fund.

By law, these entities are required to pay maintenance contributions to the Family Subsidy Fund to which they belong, thereby enabling the Fund to provide social services for

---

1 National Ministry of Education Report, 1982

2 Cleba, National Ministry of Education, Evaluation Process, 1986, p. 7

3 ibid., p. 5.

their employees and to carry out projects according to its institutional objectives.[4] Services are provided in the areas of health, recreation, housing, supermarkets and education.[5]

One of the service areas in which CAFAM has traditionally displayed a strong interest is education. This commitment is demonstrated by CAFAM's Secondary School, Educational Television, Occupational Training for Women, the General Library, and the Continuing Adult Education Program.

The administrative unit for the Adult Education Program in CAFAM is the Department of Continuing Education.[6]

2.2. How the innovative idea was born

At the beginning, the idea of CAFAED was to provide basic education to those workers who had dropped out of school in their early years. An initial survey among members of the target population indicated that people were mainly interested in returning to study in order to obtain an elementary school equivalency certificate. This demand was the motivation for CAFAM to create a strategy which would meet both the adults' expectations of a certificate and the real development needed to empower them so that they would be able to overcome their socially disadvantaged conditions.

2.3. The education problem approached by CAFAED

The fundamental problem was the lack of basic education among a considerable percentage of the adult population. Having dropped out of school, they found themselves disadvantaged in terms of education, social standing and employment.

The efforts that the various presidential administrations had carried out to rectify this problem had been limited in their coverage, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, even those members of the adult population who had completed primary education were at a serious disadvantage because of the poor quality of their achievements. In an attempt to develop a learning programme that suited adults, CAFAM created a pedagogical model especially adapted to adult learning styles and interests. The hope was that this approach would facilitate adult participants' access, motivate them to remain in education and support their development.

---

[4] By December 1994, the number of companies affiliated to CAFAM was 6,755 with a membership of 280,472 workers.

[5] The services and their coverage for the affiliated population in 1994 are as follows: health, 759,858 patients; senior citizens' program, 1,074 people; recreation, 830,522 users of its vacation centers; housing, 4,766 apartments sold to affiliated families; supermarkets, 50 stores in Bogotá.

[6] The human resources which operate in this unit consist of eleven full-time employees - - the head of department, coordinators, evaluators, facilitators and technical support staff — plus thirteen part-time facilitators who work during the study sessions.

3. Pedagogy for development

The core idea of CAFAED is human development. This idea covers various dimensions of each individual, including both the intellectual and the emotional domains. The awareness of people's dignity as human beings, of their responsibilities towards their families and community, and the reinforcement of moral and cultural values are also developed.

Social development is translated into behavior that strengthens community life and is expressed in all the fields of human performance, essentially in the family, at work, and in the community.

Pedagogy for development is an educational *concept*, a *process* and a *practice*. As a *concept* it is a learning strategy intended to:

- modify people's self-image and self-concept as the key to increasing belief in their own capacity, and to motivating them to become responsible for their own lives and those of others, and

- enable people to perceive the world around them as a scenario where they can play a constructive role by creating, in conjunction with others, conditions in which to live with dignity, quality and solidarity.

As a *process*, it represents participants' evolution through a series of stages by means of experiences, which are:

- access to new knowledge
- a process of reflective thinking to relate this new knowledge to people's own experience and context
- a process of interacting and sharing experience with others, and
- positive attitudes along the lines of new thinking so that people can influence their own private worlds and, as far as posible, the world of others.

As a *practice*, the program generates a dynamic interaction with and between participants, which starts with home study and continues in the small groups at the center.

3.1. Objectives

The purpose of the program is to satisfy two types of need: the first is personal growth and social performance, and the second is updating knowledge and developing skills required to take the State Examination, in order to earn the High School Equivalency Diploma, conferred by the Ministry of Education.

3.2. The pedagogical model

The program's pedagogical model consists of three broad areas related to an individual's realities: the cognitive, the affective and the socio-economic domains.

The cognitive domain is the structural center because it is the intellect that consciously governs a human being's life and provides support for each person's socio-affective and socio-economic development.

The affective domain (i.e., feelings, beliefs and values) enables people to better evaluate themselves, others and their surroundings, and to appreciate the value of social responsibility as a key element of community life. In the same way, this area fosters the fine-tuning of cultural identity.

The socio-economic domain favors the development of abilities and attitudes needed to achieve efficient labor performance.

3.2.1. Learning stages

The learning process is a continuum organized in stages and competencies. The program comprises three learning stages. A stage is a long-term goal (leading to a certain academic level), which in turn consists of different competencies. A competency is a short-term goal, which corresponds to specific topics, skills and values. Each competency represents an independent learning unit. In terms of instructional material, a competency corresponds to a module.

The stages are:

1. Reading and writing skills: these include literacy, reading comprehension and socialization activities.

2. Foundation studies: this stage offers competencies in the four main areas of study: Spanish, mathematics, natural sciences and health. Learners can choose the competencies which they want to study, according to their previous knowledge (i.e., from formal schooling) and their felt needs. They are not obliged to study all the competencies which are included in the program at this stage. Completion of this stage means that it is possible to obtain the officially recognized certificate of basic education.

3. Complementary studies: these are meant to develop competencies leading to higher job performance levels, higher levels of communication, and the widening of interaction beyond the limits of the environment in which the participant has been living so far. These studies also provide the competencies which are required for the next stages of preparation for the State Examination.

4. Basic and advanced areas of interest, i.e., in mathematics, physics, philosophy and chemistry: at the end of this stage participants may take the State Examination for the High School Diploma.

3.2.2. The curriculum: the exploratory group

Though a preliminary draft had already been completed, an exploratory group of 70 adults was formed with participants who wished to sit equivalency examinations to validate their primary education. This activity was begun using traditional texts and methodologies. The work with the exploratory group lasted four months. Those participants who had left school after the third or fourth level of basic education were found to have difficulties in reading comprehension,

oral and written expression, vocabulary, basic mathematics and health. Their self-esteem was low and they had difficulties in interacting with others.

This assessment served as the starting point for selecting the topics in the four basic subjects (see above). In the same way, the observations on behavior in classroom learning were a determining factor in the selection of learning strategies. It was decided from the beginning that the emphasis would be on learning as opposed to instruction. Learning evaluation, program and institutional evaluation was planned from the moment the project began. On the basis of responses obtained, modifications were introduced in every aspect of the program: content, strategies, structure of the learning process and training of facilitators.

From the outset, it was necessary to incorporate a literacy stage, which had not been contemplated in the draft design, due to the registration of people who wanted to learn to read and write.

3.2.3. The content

The population of the centers in the different geographical areas that joined the program was a decisive factor in the selection of the curriculum content and later affected the flexibility of the program so as to allow it to respond to socio-cultural peculiarities and differing expectations.

According to these criteria, the content was organized as follows:

- Common content for all environments, which corresponded to the basic topics of the academic subjects deemed essential for performance in life and to gain access to higher levels of education.

- Certain flexible contents depending on the particular cultural context of the population. In the academic area, the coordinators, monitors and facilitators introduced topics on a regional level such as social studies of the region or city where the center was located. In the socio-emotional area, values and feelings appropriate to each population were introduced. In the socio-economic area, projects and activities were included and offered by the institution as requested by the participants in order to improve their income level or to solve a particular group situation.

3.2.4. The learning process

The learning process is organized differently for each of the three learning domains. In the cognitive domain, the emphasis is on both independent home study, so that the participants can learn at their own pace and become managers of their own learning processes, and small-group work at the center so that they develop communicative competency and learn to interact with others. Independent study is guided by the structure and methodology of each module.

Group work is a central point in the program's learning methodology. Through this experience, it has been found that the ability to "formulate questions" is the key to producing interaction and reflective thinking. Accordingly, group sessions are organized to train students in the technique of "formulating questions".

In addition, groups are trained in three fundamental aspects: organizing the process and the manner of interacting in a small group, carrying out tasks, and creating a positive work

environment. Both independent study and the study group are considered to be important tools for learning how to learn, and they are constants during the study sessions.

On the other hand, complementary activities that respond to the socio-affective and the socio-economic domain are introduced. They are informal in nature. They are offered periodically, at participants' request or at the suggestion of the institution. In the socio-affective domain, the instructional strategies include educational campaigns, discussion groups, workshops, seminars, visits to cultural centers and celebrations. Instruction in the socio-economic domain is carried out through activities for learning-by-doing, such as small-business workshops, basic cooking classes and bread-making instruction. These activities usually last between four and ten hours.

Throughout the learning process each participant is responsible for his or her attendance and monitors his or her studies, asking for difficulties to be explained when necessary. It is not the teacher who chooses what to explain. Furthermore, the participant decides what additional activities are needed, apart from small-group work, in order to strengthen the learning process.

The principles behind this learning process are as follows:

- The adult is the manager of his or her own learning process. All of the elements that the teacher normally handles in the traditional education system are managed by the participant in this system.

- Participants are taught to learn that they are not just exposed to knowledge. This is used as a means of developing cognitive skills such as reflective thinking, analysis, transference, and communication.

- Participants' success from the first learning experiences increases their motivation to continue the learning process.

3.2.5. The materials

Modules An instructional module deals with one topic only and is basically designed for self-directed learning. The organization of knowledge in highly structured modules was supported by analyses of the significant relationship between instructional materials, performance and learning styles.[7]

Each module consists of three components, the guidebook, the workbook and the answer key. All of the knowledge that is to be imparted to the student appears in the guidebook. In other words, everything that would be transmitted through the teacher in the formal education system, appears in the guidebook. The workbook contains the exercises that the student must do as the result or in application of the learning achieved through the

---

[7] The results were corroborated in a study carried out in Colombia on young adults who were studying secondary education. According to these results, materials that are not very structured only aid the learning of people with an analytical style, whereas highly structured material favors people with a global learning style as well as those with an analytical learning style (Consuegra, 1981). Most of the population has a global learning style, according to the theory. This was found to be true for the Colombian population who were the target of the research.

guidebook. The answer key provides the solutions to all the exercises that the students are expected to do.

The modules have proved to provide significant support in the process of self-directed learning and evaluation. Their structure has made it easier for adults to participate in independent study and small-group work.

Additional material Other materials have been developed as support resources for academic learning and value formation. Some examples of the kind of material used for the academic area are didactic games for mathematics and Spanish, videos, and items for workshops on measurement.

Materials for reinforcing value formation include eight series of illustrations and fliers for campaigns, discussion guides and material for occasional use on bulletin boards on political events, religious holidays or family and social customs, and materials for workshops and community activities. There are laboratory materials for science as well as other resources for social studies, such as maps, globes, texts and posters.

3.2.6. Monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation system includes learner evaluation, program and institutional evaluation. The learner evaluation system includes the following aspects: a diagnostic entrance test, self-evaluation and evaluation with the evaluator.

Once a participant registers, he or she is submitted to the necessary diagnostic tests in order to place him or her on the appropriate learning level. Whenever participants complete an instructional module, they are expected to perform a self-evaluation in order to prepare for the learning evaluation to be presented to the evaluator. This last evaluation is presented at the end of each competency study area to allow the participant to be promoted to the next level.

Program evaluations are given to participants at the end of each academic semester in order to measure achievement and difficulties, and as feedback leading to action in relation to content, methodology, materials, activities, monitors, coordinators and atmosphere.

Institutions which use the program receive annually a quantitative and qualitative evaluation questionnaire, together with instructions. This institutional evaluation is returned to CAFAM's head office in order to evaluate the development of the program on a national level.

3.3. The educational agents

The educational agents are of three kinds: the facilitator, the monitor and the coordinator.

The *facilitator's* role during the sessions is to introduce the participants to the methodology of independent study and group learning and to assist the small groups with specific learning difficulties. He or she moves from one classroom to another (3 or 4) to help each group and to reinforce the role of its monitor. If requested, he or she helps in the solution of a group's problems.

The *monitor* sits with the small group during the whole session and encourages organization and group dynamics. He or she is the first resource to respond to any question from the group before calling on the facilitator.

The *coordinator* supervises the overall operation and helps the facilitators, the monitors and the participants in any situation that arises. The coordinators and facilitators may be psychologists, educators, social workers, or educational administrators.

3.3.1. Training

As CAFAED was extended and used by institutions other than CAFAM, it became necessary to train coordinators, facilitators and evaluators who wanted to use the program. CAFAM developed a training program to offer to those organizations. They are themselves responsible for training their monitors. One of the conditions laid down by CAFAM is that the recipients of the training will be the people in charge of the implementation of the program at the institution, not just the faculty members.

In the private sector, the recipients and multiplying coordinators of training are adult educators — nuns, psychologists, educational administrators and social workers. In the government sector, they are teachers from the formal education system who are carrying out duties in the official adult education programs.

Besides this initial training course, CAFAM offers in-service training and assistance to the centers which use CAFAED. The training has been one of the fundamental factors in the ability to maintain the philosophy of human development and the quality of educational service.

3.4. The adult learners

The participants involved in the program are adults living in urban and rural areas. The urban population is made up of company workers, owners of private businesses (generally in the informal sector of the economy), housewives, young people undergoing social or physical rehabilitation, the unemployed and senior citizens.

The rural population consists of peasants, some of whom live in areas affected by violence, and young people who can no longer enter the formal education system because they are considered too old for the grades which they would have to study.

3.4.1. The reaction of the learners

At first, there was some doubt or confusion on the part of the people coming to the center. The first surprise for the organizers was that the new and unconventional approach which they had developed was not easily understood by the adult population that was being targeted.

In view of this fact, the organizers decided to change the information strategy to emphasise the advantages that the program offered (i.e., no certification of prior studies was required, daily attendance was not necessary, and the program's learning scheme would cut the amount of time needed to complete the course compared with the traditional formal education system). However, the initial proposal whereby learners would have to attend the education center for only four hours a month was completely rejected by the participants, and the strategy had to be changed so that attendance of four hours per week was required for the whole program.

4. Dynamics of the learning process

One of the main characteristics of the adult education program is its flexibility. Methods that stimulate interaction and discussion such as group work, learning workshops and individual interviews have made it possible to include a variety of topics (i.e., current socio-political events). Particular requests are responded to. For example, a seminar of several sessions on

sex education has been held, an institutional program on child education has been created and an ecological tour has been established.

From the group work and the meetings have emerged particular requests from the female participants for topics relating to civil rights, child education, health, nutrition, drug adiction and alcoholism, the prevention of spinal disease, and the debate on male chauvinism vs. feminism.

Group dynamics are the key to CAFAED's strategy of developing people's learning capacities and to the focus on the individual as a member of the group or community. Work in small groups is the main activity at the center. The groups are constituted by the participants themselves, and consider topics associated with particular situations by means of written material, with the intervention of a facilitator who guides the group process and makes participation and the atmosphere of the discussion more dynamic. The basic information on the topic is presented in a module. A study guide will indicate to the group the work activities that are basic for analysis and thought. The members of the group decide how it should be organized. The role of the facilitator consists of motivating the members of the small groups, stimulating participation and guiding the interpretation of the study guide.

4.1. Example of a learning session

In a typical learning session, participants have the opportunity to carry out several learning activities, such as participating in study groups on their competencies, requesting individual tuition or help from the evaluator, and participating in one of the complementary activities.

If participants decide to learn by means of group work, they join small groups whose members (from 4 to 6) are studying the same competency. The groups are identified by a sign with the name of the competency. The participants organize their work themselves around the chosen competency. It may be that a member of a group who has finished the competency through independent study will not rejoin the group but carries out a self-evaluation and then presents the evaluation for promotion. In the next session, this participant will move into a new group where he or she will begin to study a new competency. At times, all the members of a small group decide to advance together and take the evaluation at the same time.

4.2. Complementary activities

In addition to the chosen group, participants can attend a complementary activity of particular interest such as the workshop for small businesses. The program also offers fitness courses, English as a foreign language, prayer group meetings, and health-related courses. These activities, which last from two to six weeks, can be changed or repeated at the request of the participants.

Furthermore, approximately once a month, the program offers an occasional complementary activity of general interest related to the current situation, e.g., a workshop on the formation of democracy, a patriotic or religious celebration, a session on family conflicts or community life. Tours and visits are also organized once every six months.

4.3. Educational campaigns

Educational campaigns are messages that aim to provoke thought about some aspect of behavior in family, work and social situations. The campaigns are carried out by means of posters that combine drawings and texts. The posters are shown in panels in the hallways of the center. After observing the campaign, the participants analyze the message in small groups. In order for the message to reach the participants' homes, the program publishes brochures on the same themes.

The titles of the educational campaigns that have been carried out are: Human Relations, Children's Rights, The Way to "Form" a Delinquent, Personality-Damaging Factors, A Message from a Glass of Liquor, Honesty, "Uses" of Drunkenness, Child Development Stages, Group-Work Rules, How to be a "Perfect" Bad Student, and Excuses for not Reading the Bible.

In this way, the program combines permanent academic activities with complementary occasional activities. Thus, routine is avoided and a choice of learning experiences is offered, responding to varied and changing adult interests. The different types of learning activities have also been designed in an attempt to manage the heterogeneity of the socio-cultural groups attending the centres.

5. Extension, adoption and financing the program

The extension of CAFAED to the national level has come about through the initiative of private and government organizations, which asked CAFAM to introduce the program into their regions.

Links with the government sector were formed through the initiative of the Secretariat of Education, which is involved in adult education on the departmental (i.e., state or provincial) or municipal level. The Ministry of Education has recognized the program as a private-sector, non-formal adult education program, and has granted an operating license.

The strategy adopted by CAFAM is that of giving administrative autonomy to each institution, while maintaining academic coordination with CAFAM's head office, so that educational quality and pedagogical practices which support development can be maintained.

The Ministry of Education has recently drawn up a new policy to work through a number of alternative methodologies developed by various entities in the private sector. CAFAED is one of the programs whose methodology has been accepted under the new policy and suggested to the Regional Education Secretariat.

From the beginning, the program was perceived as a service to its users financed by CAFAM. In 1985, the Ministry of Education made a donation to the program for the publication of materials, thereby permitting the primers to be provided at very low cost, or even free of charge in marginal areas, for three years. No further aid has been received since that date, and CAFAM has assumed most of the costs. The remainder has fallen on the participant through registration fees and the purchase of the instructional materials.

Another source of income is the sale of the program to those institutions that wish to use its approach. Further income is provided by the training that the CAFAED staff provide for the educational personnel of the institutions that will use the program. This has made up

for the diminishing subsidy and makes possible the financial support of the program on CAFAM'S part.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Conditions that favored implementation

A number of conditions favored the implementation of the program:

- employers' requirement that their workers should have basic education
- new demands from adults for basic education, equal opportunities, personal growth, social recognition, etc.
- the success obtained by participants in completing individual competencies and stages and the full process right up to the State Examination, which has attracted new participants or institutions
- the discovery by participants that as they satisfy their academic needs and advance in the learning process, they reach other goals of which they had not been conscious psychologically and socially, and
- the fact that the program was conceived by a private agency of known influence in the social service field, which helped it to receive institutional and financial support. At the same time, the agency granted the author and her work team total autonomy to develop the design and to implement the program, according to pedagogical requirements and social needs.

6.2. Participants' achievements

The results obtained in the program can be examined from the point of view of both the participants at CAFAM centers and social impact.

With regard to the first focus, there is qualitative information in the form of the participants' testimonies that have been obtained by interviews, surveys and spontaneous expression. The results have been interpreted with regard to the theoretical basis of the program: human, social and economic development for participation in the construction of democracy.

The social impact can be assessed from the response that different social levels have given to CAFAM's educational proposal, and from the geographical expansion of the program by means of the creation of centers throughout much of the national territory.

Participants have explained their achievements throughout the program, *not* in terms of knowledge acquired, but rather in terms of changes in their perspective on life and their social performance. They have claimed that they have an increased capacity for intervention in their socio-cultural environments.

6.2.1. Human development

The participants' answers show a change in terms of self-esteem and their perspectives on their own lives, an increased awareness of their own personal dignity and of their ability to take action in matters affecting their life, an improvement in their attitudes toward their families, and greater conciousness of human values. Recognition from other people, telling the participants of their progress, has been a growth factor in their self-esteem, higher learning motivation and better performance.

6.2.2. Social development

In accordance with the initial idea of designing an adult education program that would satisfy development needs, in contrast to the survival needs on which other programs focus, the CAFAM program participants themselves have made statements that can be considered indicators of human and social development.

In terms of social development, it is noticeable that achievements in three areas of action — the family environment, the place of work and the community — all relate to ability in dialogue and communication, recognition of others, recognition of women's rights, performance of roles, interaction and improvement of relationships, and the ability to cope with economic demands.

As far as the goal of building democracy is concerned, participants have enhanced their ability to discuss and to participate in decision-making processes, and their knowledge of channels available to them through the Constitution. The participants have become conscious of the fact that, by participating in the events leading up to the elections of governors, and carrying out citizens' duties, they are able to contribute to the construction of true democracy in the interest of common well-being.

The initial objective of providing basic education for adults so that they could overcome their disavantages in comparison with people who had graduated from the formal system, acquired a specific meaning for the participants during the program in terms of changing perceptions of themselves and their environment, and in terms of greater capacity for intervention in the environments affecting them.

The change in perception of themselves and their environments extended to action taken to bring about change within their families, their children's schools, and the community. It also led to better relations and opportunities in the working environment.

6.3. Social impact

The social impact of the CAFAED program has been measured by the following indicators: the number of institutions that have requested the program, the geographical location of such institutions, and the social sectors involved.

The institutions that are developing the CAFAED program at present can be categorized as follows:

Family Subsidy funds	22
Religious institutions	7
Social service organizations	7
Government agencies	8

Schools	5
Companies	3
Universities	2
Rehabilitation institutions	4

The program is present in 26 of the country's 32 departments (states). The centers run by these institutions are located both in major cities and in rural areas. The social sectors involved in the program are: companies, the government sector of adult education, municipal (state) level organizations, and the formal education system. In 1994 the participants came from the following business sectors in Bogotá: services, 45%; commerce, 33%; industry, 12%; finance, 1%; agriculture, 1%; 4% were government employees, and the remaining 4% independent workers (housewives, retired persons and others from the informal area of the economy).

The government sector of adult education is represented by the Adult Education Divisions of 4 departments (states).

The municipal (county) level is represented by the 4 counties (rural zones) that are very far from Santafé de Bogotá, where the program's main office is located.

The influence on the formal system can be seen in the request made by five schools to use the didactic games and the Spanish and mathematics modules in remedial courses for students, once training has been given to their teachers in the learning methodology.

Finally, the growth during its 14 years of existence is another indicator of the impact that the program has had on the adult population at the national level. In 1994, a total of 39,448 participants were registered in 218 centers around the country. Over the 14 years of the program's operation, a national total of 276,895 participants have reached some learning goal.[8]

6.4. Obstacles to success

The model has, on the other hand, encountered some obstacles, such as:

- Lack of commitment: If a registered institution does not make a true commitment to giving all the necessary financial support and to preparing staff, the results are very poor. Lack of motivation arises and the program is abandoned.

- Quality of human resources: If the facilitator does not have the human and pedagogical qualities that adults require, there is drop-out.

- Participants' goals: If participants' only goal is to obtain a certificate of studies immediately, they look for a "short cut" and do not want to go through the entire process.

- Motivation: If participants' only need is to satisfy the need to "have" and not to "be", they will probably drop out.

---

[8] Of these, 85,491 were enrolled in the Bogotá center.

- Monitors: The difficulties demonstrated by participants are specifically related to the monitors' performance in the study groups.

6.5. *Consequences for adult continuing education*

The initial purposes of the author and her team of collaborators in the adult program were to respond to a number of social realities. These were: poverty, marginality, discrimination, violence and lack of opportunities. There was an awareness, however, that education alone would not solve these problems. In fact, the role of adult education in meeting such situations was subject to the following clarifications:

- The educational strategy for change in the short term is the education of the adult by means of programs that involve the potential development of the person. With less time taken up by the educational process itself, the adult is able to make decisions for change, to intervene in his or her environment, and even to reach levels of power in organizations.

- Merely by changing circumstances which are external to the human being, be they government policies, projects or social programs, the intended development results cannot be produced. This can be observed in Colombia, where despite many expensive projects, poverty, marginality and social conflicts have increased.

- On the other hand, education alone does not produce development, but it does create human conditions that allow policies and development programs to take on full meaning, and to be used effectively and appropriately in order to change living conditions.

- This implies that while development plans may be drawn up by higher authorities through policies, projects and programs, it is from the bottom up that actions are implemented and given life. People are the motor of change if their potential is developed and if the preconditions for their participation are created.

- If adult education is to play a fundamental role in socio-economic development, it should aim at the satisfaction of high-order needs (i.e.Maslow's self-realization), well beyond the fulfillment of survival needs.

"WE GOT TOGETHER...AND?": A Project for Couples

Manuel Bastías Urra and B. Rosa Saavedra Diaz

Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de Educación (CIDE)
Santiago, Chile

1. Introduction

When Cristina and Arturo participated in the first workshop offered by the WGTA? Project, they never thought that 14 years later they would still be involved with this educational experience. Both have come a long way since the day they began to work out their problems as a couple, together with a group of people experiencing similar problems.

In the case of Cristina and Arturo, the high point was that for the first time they were provided with a safe environment in which to express themselves openly and fully, and where there was understanding for the feelings and senses involved in expressing their anguish, solitude, resentments and love.

> "I began to date my husband once again! I began to tell him what I liked and what I didn't like. Before, he never gave me the opportunity to talk about it... he was just concerned with his own sexual satisfaction. With the WGTA? Project we learned that women have the same right to feel sexually satisfied." (Cristina)

> "The way we talk about our problems doesn't hurt our feelings, and both members of the couple have the opportunity to say what is hurting." (Arturo)

From early on in the sessions the couple began to share intimate experiences, confident that they would find empathy among those people who had experienced similar problems.

This form of work appealed to Arturo and Cristina, and they thought it could be very helpful to other couples. Thus, in each session, Arturo began to copy the set of educational materials created to facilitate participation. He did this by hand, using his drawing skills. Afterwards, having these "hand-made educational materials", they began to offer the meetings to couples in their community. This was the first of a chain of occasions when a grassroots couple began to hold meetings in the community at their own initiative.

After 16 years of existence, the project has benefited approximately 30,000 couples from Arica (in the extreme North) to Punta Arenas (in the extreme South). Today, Cristina and Arturo have accumulated a large amount of experience as facilitators, and Cristina has become the head of the National Corporation of Couple Facilitators (CONPAM), created in 1993 by a group of facilitators to ensure continuity of the WGTA? Project.

2. The context

2.1. Social reality and family crisis

In Chile, during the implementation of the authoritarian, neoliberal economic model, poverty levels increased dramatically. In 1976, more than 56% of the Chilean population was

living in poverty. There were higher levels of unemployment, deterioration of wages for those fortunate workers who did keep their jobs, inadequate housing, lack of health services and other social problems. Since the return of democracy, the poverty level decreased to 34.6%.

During these critical years, since unemployment rates among men were very high, women went to work outside the home, especially in services. This forced process of role changing produced a number of conflicts between partners. On the one hand, women were overburdened because they had a double shift. On the other hand, the challenge to men's identity as providers triggered a process of personal frustration and deterioration of their self-esteem. There was also an increase in psycho-social problems among men such as isolation, alcoholism, domestic violence, mental illness and other disorders.

The economic crisis thus had a negative impact on the life of couples. Cohesion among family members deteriorated, and traditional problems experienced by poor couples (such as lack of communication, brutality by men during intercourse, a lack of interest in having sex among women, frigidity, etc.) were aggravated.

The growing social problems among Chilean families were the stimulus for the directing of attention towards the couple. The concern was to transform everyday habits, the vast stock of assumptions and definitions that give coherence and direction to the customary relationship between the sexes.

2.2. Popular education

The WGTA? Project was developed in this context of economic crisis and political repression. During those years, people became fearful, isolated and suspicious. There were few opportunities to meet, to talk and to share with others.

In many parts of the country, there were organizations, mainly NGOs or Church groups, working together for the common goal of improving people's conditions of life. Most of these grassroots educational groups, called "popular education", followed the educational methodology developed by Paulo Freire, which intends to raise consciousness in order to change the social, political, economic and cultural context. The WGTA? Project adopted Freire's methodology but introduced some new elements which were considered important for achieving its particular aims.

3. How the innovation was born

3.1. The concept of innovation

The main innovative feature of the WGTA? Project is that it can be disseminated by grassroots participants, and is sustainable over time.

The project works with both members of a couple. This is a key element in promoting change within the uneven relationship between men and women. If both partners recognize the existence of a problematic situation they will be in a better position to initiate a process of change which can break with long-standing cultural patterns.

The workshop sessions are animated by "couple facilitators", who play a key role in the group dynamic of sharing intimate experiences.

Educational materials developed to facilitate dialogue between participants were another innovation of the project. Game boards, worksheets, discussion booklets or other conversation tools were created for each two-hour session.

3.2. Origin of the project

The idea of working with couples emerged from discussions and reflection among the educators linked to the Parents and Children Project (PPH), a non-formal early childhood educational project developed in 1973 among poor families living with children less than six years old.

That project's main weakness was the low attendance by men at the meetings. As a result, the idea emerged of developing a new project which would attract both members of a couple and would establish a strong relationship between family education and social change. The project was intended to reach those couples from the bottom of society — married or living together — who had never had the opportunity of sharing and discussing their experiences with others.

From the analysis of the PPH project, six principles were developed for the new WGTA? Project:

1) The family is a cultural institution and a social product.
2) Parents tend to reproduce in the process of child-rearing the same cultural patterns that they experienced in their childhood, such as male chauvinism and sexual stereotypes.
3) Social change must also be conceived at the micro level, as transformation in the quality of life, culture and day-to-day human relationships.
4) Change is more likely to happen, faster and more permanently, if both members of a couple participate in an educational grassroots experience.
5) The sooner the couple confronts its marital difficulties the better. The first stage of life together seems critical for both partners, and its characteristics help to determine the success of education which aims to change their gender relationship.
6) The construction of a more democratic society requires more egalitarian relationships between men and women.

On the basis of these six criteria, the WGTA? educational project for young couples was developed. The project has three major objectives:

1) To improve the quality of life of the couple through the sharing of experiences, information and techniques, involving both partners in the educational activity;
2) To promote a more egalitarian relationship between both partners as well as a more egalitarian socialization of children, through the critical analysis of gender issues, communication, roles, intimacy, parenting and so on;
3) To make an impact in the community, by motivating participants to disseminate the educational project in their neighborhood.

4. The development of the WGTA? Project: from planning to dissemination

The WGTA? Project, during its 16 years of existence, fell into five stages: a) assessment; b) pilot project; c) validation of the approach; d) dissemination throughout the country; and e) networking and sustainability.

4.1. Stage 1: Assessment of young couples' lives

The first step in the WGTA? Project was to define a possible educational curriculum to work with couples. In 1978, research was initiated to study the issues that couples experience during their early years.[1]

Analysis of the information gathered revealed some typical aspects of couples' lives:

- In poor areas, couples get together for specific reasons, e.g., to avoid authoritarian parents, to have intercourse without restriction, or to escape from situations of conflict.
- A domineering relationship between husband and wife becomes consolidated within the first few years of marriage, especially after the arrival of the first child.
- The quality of communication between the couple is poor and tends to worsen over the years; most of the information shared is about such things as the domestic economy and child-rearing, rather than expectations and feelings.
- Among poor couples it is uncommon to talk about pregnancy and family planning. Sexuality is a topic that is avoided or not openly expressed.
- Frustration and conflicts are displaced by diversion of interests. That is, women focus their attention on bringing up the children, and men increase their interest in the public sphere.

Two main problem areas were defined. The first includes gender roles, communication, sexuality and intimacy. The second covers conflicts between parents after the arrival of the first child (socialization of children, change in the relationship between the couple due to the new family constellation). These two areas guided the design of two educational units, which we refer to as couple workshops: "The Couple" and "The Couple with Children". After several years of implementing the WGTA?, in 1988, a third couple workshop, "Parent-Teenager Relationships" was designed. In this workshop the adolescents are active participants.

The contents of the three couple workshops of the "We Got Together...And?" Project can be summarized as follows. The material is listed in the order used:

---

[1] The research was funded by the Regional Committee for Studies on Human Sexuality for Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC). The CIDE team was composed of two men and one woman. They carried out personal interviews with both members of six young couples in Pudahuel and Lo Hermida (poor neighborhoods of Santiago de Chile).

Workshop 1. "The Couple"

- Remembering our first date	(worksheet)
- Why we go together	(worksheet)
- How are we?	(card game)
- Communication	(discussion booklet)
- Appropriate communication	(photo-dialogue)
- Types of couple	(game board)
- The couple	(monopoly)
- The couple and their bodies	(discussion booklet)
- Intimacy	(game board)
- Review of the workshop/Closure	(collage)

Workshop 2. "The Couple with Children"

- Expecting the first child	(lottery)
- The arrival of the child	(discussion booklet)
- The couple and the child	(dominoes)
- Types of parents	(game board)
- Sexual education of the children	(competitive race)
- How many children are enough?	(spontaneous responses)
- Intercourse	(history)
- Review of the workshop/Closure	(collage)

Workshop 3. "Parent-Teenager Relationships"

- Identity	(card game)
- Dialogue	(card game)
- Friendship	(histories)
- Dating	(labyrinth)
- The human body	(card game)
- Sex and love	(constructing buildings)
- Family	(card game)
- Family and society	(map and signs)
- Family and school education	(treasure hunt)
- Review of the workshop/Closure	(collage)

4.2. Stage 2: The pilot project

The pilot phase of the WGTA? Project was carried out under the title of "Sexual Education for Couples". The goal of this stage (1979-1981), which included two pilot groups, was to test the educational program created to work with young couples.

After the pilot phase, the following changes were introduced:

1) The name of the project was changed from "Sexual Education for Couples" (the word "sexual" has a negative connotation among people) to the name "We Got

Together...And?" (which helped to reflect the doubts and confusion that couples face as a result of getting together and establishing a relationship).

2) Following a suggestion by the participants, the facilitators attended the sessions with their own partners. The key role of the couple facilitators as a couple in the dynamics of sharing intimate experiences and in critical reflection about them was thereby acknowledged.

3) Materials to promote communication among participants were tested, and a first session dealing with the feelings they experienced when dating was added.

4.3. Validation of the approach: dissemination of the project within Santiago

In this stage, the intention was to find a way of disseminating the project within Santiago and of developing a model for training community facilitators.[2]

Santiago was divided into four geographic areas, a CIDE couple coordinator being in charge of each area. These couples were selected from the groups which had already participated in the project, and their role was to contact the authorities of local organizations in order to gain their collaboration in the dissemination process. The diagram below shows the collaborative relationship established among the different actors in the project during this stage.

CIDE RESEARCHERS <----------> CIDE COORDINATORS

FACILITATORS

COUPLE GROUPS

The experience of this stage of the project provided the main criterion for the design of a training model for facilitators, which focuses on training through practice.[3]

One problem the WGTA? Project faced was the small size of the groups (five to six couples) and the possibility of drop-out because of the critical nature of the topics. In order to minimize the risk that men or women might feel attacked or criticized, the project attempted to get away from discussing only conflict and deficiencies. In consequence, participants are motivated to analyse the topics starting from the conduct they observe in the community, among other couples. This collective analysis sets out to find the main problems that exist and to determine their causes, but also to establish the unsatisfied needs and the values which are important for the couple and for each partner.

---

2 From this second stage the project was funded by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA).

3 According to the data gathered by the CIDE staff, during a period of one year, couple groups were constituted in 29 localities of Santiago. The activities of some of these participants, who acted as facilitators in 111 grassroots workshops, benefited 660 ordinary couples.

4.4. Dissemination throughout the country

In 1984, the project developed a plan to disseminate the couple workshops throughout the country. Those couples who wanted to disseminate the project in their communities were asked to build up a small team of facilitators, involving three or four other couples. The emphasis at this stage was therefore placed on creating and strengthening teams of couples in a number of cities.

In 1989, 72 teams were working throughout the country. Of these, 79% were linked to the Church, 15% to schools and 6% to community organizations. At the time of data collection, 50% of them were active, that is, during that year they worked with 162 groups of couples and benefited 1,094 couples.

Altogether, from the beginning of the project in 1982 until the data were collected in 1989, 1,364 workshops had been carried out and 9,032 couples had participated in these sessions.[4] Eighty per cent of these activities had centered on the first couple workshop, "The Couple".

After the first year of the mass dissemination stage of the WGTA? Project, it was almost impossible for CIDE to control and follow up the entire process of dissemination. Various Chilean and foreign organizations, mainly churches and schools, used the educational materials developed by the project. To date, it is estimated that nearly 30,000 ordinary couples have benefited from this project.

The main explanation for this expansion is the motivation or "mystique" of the couples who become volunteer facilitators. Given their positive experience and Catholic values, they have a strong motivation to improve their way of living and to help others.

4.5. Networking and sustainability: the National Corporation of Couple Facilitators (CONPAM)

During the expansion phase of WGTA?, support for facilitators'groups was CIDE's main activity. This fact gave rise to a number of expectations regarding the role of this educational research institution and surpassed its capacity to support facilitators' activities.

By the end of the 1980s, a large number of couples were working as facilitators, but many of them were working in isolation. Links with the Church (through schools and parishes) were a key factor in the development and dissemination of WGTA?, but the project also wanted to reach groups not related to the Church. Furthermore, the project was heavily dependent on external financial sources and there were periods in which it ceased its activities because of lack of support.

In 1992, a small group of couple facilitators took the initiative of confronting the crisis and proposed the creation of an organization of facilitators as a tool to sustain activities over time and to gain independence from the traditional sources of funding. In September 1993, the National Corporation of Couple Facilitators (CONPAM) was created. There are two requirements for membership: to be an active couple facilitator and to pay a monthly

---

[4] Data gathered through follow-up of the facilitators' activities. There are no systematic statistics after 1989, and the data collected in 1989 are incomplete.

subscription. It is expected that, in the near future, the grassroots activities of CONPAM will be completely funded by its members.[5]

The facilitators' organization has introduced substantive changes in the structure of the project. The role of CIDE has been diminished to that of assessor of CONPAM and, gradually, a more equal relationship is developing. The present leaders of CONPAM are performing some of the former CIDE coordinators' roles, that is, they are organizing the field work and carrying out the administrative activities.

5. The actors in the project

There are four main actors: the CIDE team, the coordinators, the couple facilitators and the participants. The roles of these actors have changed over time.

The CIDE team

The strong institutional support of CIDE has been a key factor in the creation and dissemination of WGTA?. CIDE's central team was in charge of carrying out the design, elaboration and implementation of the project.[6]

The coordinators

These were paid community members selected and trained by the CIDE central team. Their duty was to carry out specific tasks in four geographical areas of Santiago, during the dissemination phase of the project. The four couple coordinators started work in 1982 and were the key to disseminating this educational initiative in different communities until 1990.

The facilitators

The facilitators are the several hundred volunteer couples who, after going through the educational experience of the couple workshops, have assumed the responsibility of acting as facilitators of couple workshops. They use the educational aids provided by the project, and they prepare and guide each workshop's sessions.

By comparison with ordinary couples living in the community, facilitators are in privileged positions because at least one has a stable job, one or both partners have previous experience of participation in community groups or are related to Christian community groups, and both have a better educational level.

The participants

The participants are ordinary couples, married or living together. The hardest challenge facilitators face is to find interested couples to attend the workshop.

---

5 To date, after one year of existence, the organization has handled a small amount of money estimated as the equivalent of US$ 800, and it has registered 120 couples.

6 In its early years, the project was directed by a couple who worked with an assistant. Today there is a part time member of CIDE playing the role of assessor of the National Corporation of Couple Facilitators (CONPAM).

Usually, couples show up at the first session with a certain degree of reluctance; that is, spouses agree to attend the first session on the clear understanding, especially among the men, that they will decide after the first community group experience whether they will stay as members of the group or not. However, because they feel comfortable and welcomed by facilitators and they are captivated by the educational materials and the participative methodology used, few of them drop out.

6. The educational process

The educational process of the project has two elements: a) the sharing of experiences and the critical reflection on the cultural factors that guide everyday behavior; and b) what each couple does after each weekly session.

6.1. Commitment, participation and sharing of experiences

Usually, five or six couples participate in the ten sessions of each workshop. A year after completing the first workshop, they are invited to participate in the second couple workshop, "The Couple with Children" or, if they have adolescent children, in the third couple workshop, "Parent-Teenager Relationships".

A key element of the workshop is the sharing of individual experiences with other couples in the community. Each session of the workshop has a general theme related to life as a couple. Participants use their own experiences as a source of knowledge, but they also receive important information about sexuality and gender issues from the group. Facilitators do not behave as "experts" but see themselves as part of the learning process.

The educational materials used by facilitators stimulate participants to engage in a communicative event in which they, as rational human beings, can analyse their own reality, and can raise questions about things which are taken for granted, e.g., chauvinism and authoritarianism. Since each person is asked to offer an opinion, sometimes contributing a piece of the story of his/her life, everybody becomes involved in the process of searching for a new view of the problem. Through this joint process, the group comes to conclusions which become norms that participants are committed to respect, because they were agreed upon within the group.

6.2. Putting group experience into action: the couple as the main actor

The second element of the educational process is internal. The experience of the project has shown that the more important change process occurs after the sessions. Here, the main actor is each couple.

The collective reflection provides participants with common ideals which will be used as a framework to evaluate their own situation. After the session, women and men are able to express their viewpoints, formulate demands of each other, and discuss the changes which need to be introduced into their relationship. Usually, there is a process of negotiation between the partners, who attempt to establish a more egalitarian relationship: men become more cooperative in domestic tasks, flexible, tender and communicative; women start to be more active in their sex life, and willing to participate in community activities.

7. Group dynamics: the example of the first couple workshop

In order to illustrate some of the dynamics experienced in each session, the following pages describes the ten sessions of the first workshop, called "The Couple".

7.1. Session One: Remembering our first date

In this session the couples are invited to recall the beginning of their relationship.

The feeling that we are not alone in our experiences is perceived right from the first session of the workshop:

> "...we realized that our problems are universal, because each of us experiences the same or similar situations, so that there is no need 'to drown in a glass of water'." (Woman)

Very often people forget about those warm moments involved in the first encounter, so that when they are given the opportunity to share them with each other once again, they set a special mood in the group and in the couple. This in turn provides excellent motivation for attendance at the subsequent sessions.

7.2. Session Two: Why we got together

The couple is asked to choose the answer which is closest to why they decided to live together or get married. The material used in this session presents alternatives such as: Because I was pregnant, I was feeling lonely or I needed someone to arrange the house for me. There are also blank spaces to be filled in by participants.

Moreover, if there are couples whose decision had nothing to do with love, their experience is validated and accepted:

> "Nobody tells you what is correct or incorrect, so one feels free to talk about things as they are..." (Woman)

> "The truth is that I didn't love my husband when we decided to get married, neither did he... We were both living alone, didn't have any family or anyone who cared for us...then one day he said to me: Why don't we get married so that we can help and be company for one another? I thought he was right...so we got married. Love came later in our married life..." (Woman)

When people begin to share experiences like the one above, which are not easily shared in other situations, the rest of the couples feel free to talk about aspects such as getting married because of pregnancy or other reasons that are usually hidden.

The second session helps participants to understand that their personal experiences are a valuable source of knowledge for the group:

> "Looking back I realized that my opinion could be very helpful to other people. I used to be so naive and silly, now it is not that easy to cheat me....and I want to tell this

experience to other women, so they may realize too that there is hope for change..." (Woman)

"When I attended the workshop, it allowed me to open up to others and in the process I was able to discover a hidden self; before I thought I didn't have anything to offer to other people..." (Man)

These feelings play an important role within the group development, creating a sense of hope and self-confidence which is seen as instrumental in maintaining group participation.

7.3. Session Three: How are we?

This session is devoted to reviewing and criticizing the conventional roles of men and women in the relationship (e.g., he is supposed to be in charge of children's punishment or may get away with infidelity and take the initiative in sex; she is passive and does not show sexual interest).

With this session, the group begins to enter a more conflictual field. The material used for this session is a card game played by the entire group. The rules of the game are that each couple playing puts down a card on the board when it is their turn. They decide whether the card chosen goes to the man or to the woman, because the rules do not accept a card in between. The couple playing must explain their decision to the group members, and then the others must give their opinion. The group is led to discover who does what within the couple, to find out the reasons why it is so and to imagine alternative forms of behavior.

7.4. Session Four: Communication

This session is devoted to discovering the different perceptions that a man and a woman have of the conflict between them. The educational material used for this session is a story of a young couple who are experiencing difficulties. They feel unhappy with the relationship they have, but, instead of telling each other what is concerning them, they talk with a friend. Through their story, the group is able to understand how a lack of communication begins to build up within the couple.

One difficulty in the workshop is male domination in the discussions. For this reason, in some workshop sessions (such as session 4) men and women first discuss separately before the topic is debated by the entire group:

"I have always had difficulties in getting along with my husband. He is too rigid and authoritarian. At least now he doesn't hit me any more. I remember when I was eight months pregnant with my older daughter, he got furious about something and began to hit me. He sat on top of me, pressing my tummy and punching me. The pain was immense...I have never forgotten that experience, but I have never told him how I still resent what happened that day..." (Woman)

"We were involved in an accident in which my older daughter died. I was badly injured but I recovered well. My husband was driving. I have always had the idea that my husband wished I had died instead of our daughter... Sometimes, when he looks at me

I feel he is thinking: Why her instead of you?. He doesn't know about this feeling...I haven't said... I am afraid that he would confirm my beliefs..." (Woman)

7.5. Session Five: Appropriate communication

As we saw above, communication does not increase after marriage. On the contrary, it tends to diminish, and this is one of the most widespread difficulties among poor families.

The educational material created for this session shows an attempt by someone to communicate with his/her partner, (e.g., José, I feel bad because you always fall asleep when I want to make love) and five possible answers to each attempt (e.g., If you went to bed earlier we wouldn't have that problem).

The main idea is to examine the different answers that can be given to a partner when he/she talks. The group has to find the answers that will open the channel of communication of feelings and deep concerns, as well as to differentiate clearly what kind of answers will have the effect of closing that channel. In order to accomplish this, the work is done in separate groups of women and men.

By the end of this session, the group has gathered five times, cohesiveness has been attained and the members of the group are more tolerant of one another. It is in this environment that people go deeper in sharing their inner world and learn how to communicate their feelings to their partners.

7.6. Session Six: Types of couple

Different types of couples exist, depending on the way spouses interact with each other. In the Chilean culture, the most common types of couple are those classified as authoritarian and mutually dependent, in which the man is usually "in charge" and the women "obeys".

The material used for this session is a big card which has four types of couple: mutually dependent, domineering, individualistic, and complementary. In the middle of the card there are activities that the couple may have to do: shopping or dancing. The participants are asked to review how these different types of couple would behave in those given situations. In the case of shopping, the alternatives are: a) each one buys what he/she wants according to his/her own taste; b) they are unable to do the shopping if the other partner is not there; c) they buy without consulting the other person; and d) both agree on what has to be bought.

Here, participants have the opportunity to discover how important it is to talk beforehand about everyday situations. They realize that events which seem unimportant at first sight may become sources of conflict within the couple.

7.7. Session Seven: The couple

This session sets out to demonstrate that partners' values and beliefs are received from the social environment. A monopoly game helps participants to discover in what way the social and cultural environment affects life as a couple.

Various situations and feelings are discussed. In the game, there is a drawing of a woman's face with a caption that reads: "Feel jealous"; a man with a caption that reads: "Unemployed"; a couple with a caption that reads: "Say something nice". There is also a picture showing different methods of contraception, saying: "Wants to use the pill".

Other questions raised in the game are: Who does what? And, Who goes where? Cards are given out such as: wash the clothes, sweep the house, visit friends, go to the bar, go to church, buy medicines, attend parents' meetings.

7.8. Session Eight: The couple and their bodies

Sexuality is discussed in seperate groups by the male and the female participants. Each group is presented with a story of a man and a woman. In the case of the young woman, she is in the clinic for her monthly check-up for her pregnancy and tells another woman sitting beside her that for her it is very difficult to imagine how a baby can be born through such a small passage. In the case of the man, the story refers to a person who has been kicked in his testicles during a soccer game, and the concern that the player has for the problems that this may produce.

The stories help the participants to talk about their own experiences of the subject. The women, for example, speak about their lack of knowledge with respect to their sexuality. The men may discuss issues such as how they are supposed to function at any time.

This session prepares the group for the next session, which goes further into the sexual relationship.

7.9. Session Nine: Intimacy

One of the main difficulties during the pilot project was to make people talk about their sex lives. Sexuality is a topic which is strictly avoided in conversations within the couple and in children's upbringing.

The educational material created for the session helps to review some myths, behaviors and needs regarding intimacy, for example: "A big penis produces more pleasure." This meeting ends up being one of the most lively. People usually laugh a great deal and make a lot of jokes, behavior which shows how difficult it is for them to deal with the topic and helps them to relax during the conversation. The effects of this workshop's session may be illustrated by the following quotations:

> "...before, she was ashamed to show me her naked body...she did it after the workshop, and I saw her for the first time. I began to know her better. We learned that as our bodies grow older, in time, they won't be as beautiful as they used to be, but we accept that and enjoy ourselves more." (Man)

> "I used to think that sexuality was something sinful and dirty...something that you don't talk about... Here I learned that if God made us with sex, it is because it is something good. Here I grew as a person and as a woman." (Woman)

7.10. Session Ten: Closure

The final session is a special occasion for group members, because it is an opportunity to share what they have learned with guests from the community. This final session of the workshop is a "fiesta", a social occasion which allows participants to celebrate what they have learned and the deep friendships established among members of the group.

Each couple generally brings a "collage", made by the couple at home, which helps them to talk about the meaning of the couple workshop and the significance it has had in their lives. Following a presentation of the experiences, the couple receives a diploma from the facilitators.

Usually, the participants testify to friendship, commitment to values and self-change:

> "The most important thing in it was just having a group there, people that I could always talk to, that wouldn't walk out on me. There was so much concern, friendship and humanity in the group and I was a part of it..." (Woman)

> "....now each day I close the window and the door and sweep inside. I realized that it is hard for me, as a "macho" man, to act differently and it is easier to go along with things as they are... The environment is very powerful and machismo is widespread because all of us were brought up in a traditional way... I decided to sweep because I realized that men and women are equal, I want to change my way of life, but I am aware that people in the community criticize if they see a man involved in a woman's task. It is a great risk if someone sees me doing this now because men in this area are so male chauvinist that I am sure that they are going to laugh or tell jokes and then I will give up.
>
> "I want to change. Consequently, one important step is to acquire self-confidence in sweeping. Also I think that it is very important to re-educate my children on how to be a man, to show by my own example that men can do the same things that women do. This is the reason for closing the windows and the door...but I am clear that this effort is not enough because the most important thing is to change others, so I plan one day to open the door and the window in order that people passing by can see me sweeping as a natural activity." (Man)

8. Some outcomes

8.1 Coverage

One of the successes of the project has been its coverage and sustainability. According to the facilitators, each group is unique and has a particular profile of experiences. They therefore feel that each couple workshop is a new experience, even though they use the same materials and discuss the same topics. This characteristic is one of the main reasons why volunteers remain for an extended period of time.

8.2 The main results according to the leaders of CONPAM

In order to arrive at an overview of the WGTA? Project, the meaning of the "Couple Workshop" and the contributions of the project in the socio-cultural sphere, eight couple leaders of CONPAM were chosen as informants.[7]

---

[7] They were chosen as informants because they knew the project best: they had experienced the couple workshop at least eight years previously, they had accumulated wide experience as

8.2.1. A view of the WGTA? Project

The leaders were asked, first, to give their own definition of the "We Got Together...And?" Project from their own experience. These individual definitions were shared in the group. According to them, the WGTA? Project is:

> "An educational service for poor families. Through the use of participatory methodologies and educational materials, it creates a social opportunity for a process of integral education among the couples participating. The group experience allows individuals to overcome isolation, to share their intimate experiences, and to evaluate their lives as individuals, couples and families, it improves their self-esteem, and it encourages the desire for personal development and to overcome the obstacles that affect the quality of life."

The definition of WGTA? given by the CONPAM leaders provides a good summary of the project and identifies four key elements:

- A project for poor families
- A social opportunity to learn together
- Education as a communicative event among men and women
- Learning through an analysis of participants' own perception of reality

8.2.2. The meaning of the couple workshop

In a second question, the informants were asked to find the word which they felt gave the best account of the couple workshop. A selection of the answers received is given below:

- Human Life
  "The workshop provides a space in which participants can engage in a process of [building a] human relationship."
- Window
  "It helps us to look at our reality as individuals living in a world which presents us with many problems and challenges."
- Illuminative
  "It illuminates those things which are usually taken for granted or not revealed."
- Growing
  "It allows us to grow as women, and later as couples. It allows women to express their feelings openly."
- Creative
  "Participation awakens the desire to create new things, to modify our lives, and to transform ourselves and our existences."
- Construction
  "The group experience provides useful information and tools to change our everyday life."

---

couple facilitators and they had played an active role in finding a way to sustain the project over time.

- Echo
  "This experience is like an echo. Those couples who live through the workshop communicate their experience to other couples. It propagates itself."

The words found by the leaders of CONPAM can be summarized in five features that demonstrate the project's educational objectives:

- Its contents are centered on the participants' human experiences.
- The educational methodology is a tool which allows couples to evaluate their own reality for themselves.
- The group experience is future-oriented; that is, it allows participants to reject the *status quo*, to dream of a better social world and to reorient their everyday actions.
- Social change is understood as a matter of personal involvement, that is, it requires individuals who are creative and motivated to act historically within the real world.
- Dissemination and sustainability are achieved through the educational materials of the project and the actions of the community facilitators.

8.3. The main results of the workshops according to facilitators

Twenty-three couple facilitators were invited to participate in a one-day gathering. They were divided into six groups and worked on various topics related to the methodology of the project, its difficulties and its outcomes. The facilitators' views are summarized in the following paragraphs.

8.3.1. The educational approach

One important characteristic of the WGTA? Project is its methodological approach. There is a high degree of clarity among facilitators regarding the characteristics and principles of the participatory methodology they use during the encounters. From the chart below, it is clear that they perceive a clear difference between the educational methods used in other settings and the methodological approach they use.

APPROACHES ROLES	OTHER PROJECTS	WGTA? PROJECT
Educators	- They are speakers. - They give recipes. - They act like professors. - They do not give the opportunity to participate. - They think they know everything.	- We motivate dialogue and participation. - We are educators, we act like facilitators. - We help silent people to participate.
Learners	- The audience does not participate. - People are passive and do not contribute solutions.	- There is communication. - People are active, give opinions and reach conclusions.

8.3.2. Problems encountered by facilitators

The main problems faced by facilitators are:

1. Difficulties in motivating couples, men's reluctance to attend, and weak support from local authorities;
2. Groups with people from different backgrounds, conflictual couples in the group, and making everyone take part in the discussion;
3. Too little time to analyse each topic, few material resources, and lack of techniques to animate groups;
4. Lack of appropriate meeting places and child-minders.

8.3.3. The effects among ordinary participants

In the view of facilitators, the project has a number of effects It:

- brings people together
- improves family life
- strengthens couples' relationships
- finds ways of confronting everday problems
- reinforces life as a couple
- helps people to stop and look at themselves
- helps people to think about who they are
- enables people to practice what they learn

The main effect of the project on participants is in the sphere of communication. Facilitators recognize that after the group experience, there is a willingness to talk about issues which are problematic for the couples. The educational experience also increases togetherness (comprehension and love) among family members. Couples start to share activities, they go out together, and they develop goals for their future.

8.3.4. Motto

Finally, facilitators were asked to think of a motto to sum up the project:

- Corner stone to support family life
- Love others as yourself
- Commitment to other human beings
- A good group experience to find the way to happiness
- An effort by some couples to serve and benefit others
- A marvellous experience of love and learning together

8.4. Changes experienced by participants

The participants' perception of changes experienced in their life was collected mostly through individual interviews with facilitators.

8.4.1. Gender roles

Most couples report dramatic changes in gender roles and responsibilites, because they see themselves as acting completely differently now. When this is explored in greater detail,

however, the change appears more subjective than real, since what seems changed is the person's way of thinking about these roles, rather than his or her everyday behavior.

Although participants perceive that housework, child-rearing and money-raising are shared duties, they still act as if they were the responsibility of one or the other. Nonetheless, with this new attitude they try to help each other in these tasks. It is more likely now, for example, that a woman will ask her husband to help if she needs a hand with housework, and that he will agree to do so. This is a very important change, since previously it was unthinkable that men would help around the house, and less likely that women would tell them to do something. The following opinions illustrate the changes in this area:

> "We realize that our role is not only to bring money home, but also to share responsibilities for bringing up children and housework. Now I help with the cleaning, wash the dishes and so on, although sometimes I spend months without helping in the house...that is because of my work... But any time I have the opportunity, I help." (Man)

> "Change has to begin little by little within the home... We do not have to wait for changes in society... For example, if the mother gets sick, she may ask her son to prepare a cup of tea for her..." (Woman)

> "Now I help her around the house. For example, when I get home from work, I lay the table and wash the dishes after dinner..." (Man)

Role change is not only difficult for men, but also for women. Some of them may perceive their position in society as threatened if one sex begins to do things culturally assigned to the other.

> "I was raised in the belief that women are the ones in charge of housekeeping and I feel bad when José steps into the kitchen, nor do I like my son helping me with the laundry. I know they do it because they want to help me, but I don't like it. It's not right by me..." (Woman)

> "...doing things inside the house is not difficult, the problem is sweeping the front of the house, that is terrible, because here the men are too "macho", so they look at me as if I were a weirdo..." (Man)

> "We are able to have the same responsibilities. For example, I have worked outside the house to raise money to help him...and this doesn't mean that I forget about my duties at home." (Woman)

8.4.2. Self-esteem

Individual changes are especially remarkable in the case of women; they are noticeable soon after the first few sessions, especially where men and women work separately. Women participants are usually very shy at the beginning of the workshop and let the men talk for them about "important" issues or make decisions for them when participating. But soon they no longer feel ashamed of talking about sexuality and they feel more confident because of the

sensation that they have something to offer to the group: their experience of life. The workshop provides them with a place where their experiences are valued.

The women in the workshop often become interested in other areas of participation or study, e.g., participation in the neighborhood organization, working with women themselves, finishing high school or undertaking studies so as to specialize in areas in which they are interested:

"When the workshop was over, I felt the willingness to educate myself. I got the desire to take courses, to read about different subjects..."

"I'm working to get my high school diploma now. It's never too late..."

Improvement in self-esteem seems to be the one main impact on women after the workshop:

"Something that was very impressive for me, was to realize that people no longer recognized me because I was Arturo's wife, but because I was Cristina... I learned to value myself. I am important too. I wanted to educate myself... I didn't have pride in myself before..."

"I liked the workshop, I learned, I grew...I was too shy...it allowed me to be at the same level as my partner... I feel fulfilled and important when people ask me about my work as facilitator... I am a person and I have a value everywhere..."

This sense of confidence is also expressed by men:

"At the beginning I felt scared because I thought that people would be using difficult language, but soon I learned that what I had to say was the most important thing...."

8.4.3. Sexual intercourse

The sexual relationship seems to improve, thanks to the sharing of concerns, likes and dislikes about the subject:

"My mother used to teach us that we had to pretend to feel a lot of pleasure when making love with our husbands. The doctor told us the same thing. Then I began to wonder: Why are men supposed to be satisfied in sex and women not? Then, I thought that if it had to be like that for men, the same went for women. We have the same right. So I began to change. I learned to say what I liked and what I didn't like. It was wonderful!" (Woman)

"Before, I didn't care if she was satisfied after intercourse, I was myself and that was all. Here we learned to talk, and she lost the fear of saying what she wanted." (Man)

"Our sexual intercourse was really bad. I had to do everything. After we had sex she used to sleep placidly and I found it difficult to fall sleep, thinking that she was just

doing it to keep the peace, as part of her duties... There wasn't a word of kindness or a caress for me...nothing... I felt bad inside...I felt unappealing to her... (Man)

"The workshop helped us to talk about sex, and little by little she began to lose her fears. Now it seems amazing that after 20 years of marriage I saw my wife naked for the first time. Now it comes naturally to us, it is beautiful to accept our bodies as they are and to understand that we are both growing older." (Man)

8.4.4. Communication and expression of feelings

This aspect appears to improve, especially for those couples who are monitors, since the preparation of the sessions forces the couple to sit and talk about the way they will be conducting them. This may be due to a shared sense of duty and diligence when working toward the preparation of a session, since they have something in common over which they are at the same level: both have experiences to share with the group. Moreover, when they have to go to other towns or cities, they have the opportunity to be alone, without children, and to enjoy themselves while visiting those places.

The improvement in communication is not only verbal, but also in small gestures:

"When we have to travel outside the city, we feel very happy at being alone. We walk down the streets holding hands, sometimes we stop and kiss. There is nobody requiring our presence! It helps to be alone. Makes us feel good and free!" (Woman)

"At the beginning my wife didn't want to go, because she was ashamed to talk about sex... In the workshop we found each other as partners. We discovered that there were still many things that held us as a couple, and it wasn't only the children... There was still love for each other in our hearts." (Man)

"After we got married we never said that we loved each other...We discovered once again that we were in love and we expressed that verbally. It was a good and beautiful experience." (Man)

"I used to be a very absent husband, a womanizer, so I always saw myself as a bad father...but my wife told me that it wasn't true, that in fact I was a caring and responsible father, and she added that the problem was with her. She told me how lonely she felt and how during our sexual encounters she wasn't able to feel anything. If she had told me this in another context, I mean without the couples workshop, without a doubt I would have left her. Instead, my attitude was a willingness to learn how to become closer to her and how to satisfy her in sex. We learned that together. This was a revealing experience since before I felt "so macho" with women, and here I was, unable to satisfy my own wife. The way we say things within the sessions doesn't hurt our feelings, instead it allows us to understand each other's feelings." (Man)

8.4.5. Power issues

The couple tend to become less hierarchical, and they feel closer to each other. Each partner tends to share his or her feelings more often without fear:

"Before the workshop I thought that it was my duty to serve and obey him. Now, I value and love myself more and I feel we both have the same rights." (Woman)

"Here we discover the value of our partner. Before I didn't [like it] if she said no to something that I wanted, so she obeyed without question, now she says no and the reasons for that no, and I like that." (Man)

8.4.6. Social life

The couple expand the number of friends they have or they change them in search of relationships in which they can share both everyday events and deep personal concerns:

"Before, I was in a very closed circle of friends, always the same people, now life is gentler, more varied. I am willing to talk about a given topic, before I wasn't in the mood to do so. Now I approach people, I feel willing to talk." (Man)

9. Conclusions: Lessons learned

From the analysis of the experience of the WGTA? Project we have learned that:

- It is important in the development of any innovation to take the context into account. This innovation started from a felt social need. Innovations must be suited to the specific cultural characteristics of the learners. The participative assessment carried out by the WGTA? Project during its pilot phase threw up the topics needed to induce change among couples. The educational materials were tested in order to make sure that they suited the context of the learners.

- Innovations aiming at empowerment and change need to anticipate the outcomes which social dynamics will provoke and the requirements to be created by the new social situation. The WGTA? Project did not foresee the need for facilitators in its organization, the changing role of CIDE, or the new educational needs of participants.

- Leadership and networking seem to be key activities in sustaining an innovation. The creation of teams of facilitators and of the means of coordination among them encouraged them to establish their own organization for themselves (CONPAM).

THE FISHERFOLK ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT: A TIMELY INNOVATION IN POPULAR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling

Tambuyog Development Center
Quezon City, Philippines

Environmental education had been defined by the International Union on the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as "the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills [and] attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among men and women, his/her culture and his/her bio-physical surroundings. It also entails the practice in decision-making and self-formulation of a code of behavior about issues concerning environmental quality." This definition influenced Tambuyog Development Center in its implementation of the environmental education project. The project aimed at the translation of cognitive understanding of environmental processes and concepts into positive action on the environment. This was done by combining environmental education activities with a strong socio-ecological perspective. This aspect, according to the main actors in the project, made the project an innovative initiative.

This document looks into the various aspects of the environmental education project: its principles, objectives and components, the processes involved, the responses from the main actors and partners of this initiative and the reflections and insights which made the project an innovation in the field of non-formal environmental adult education.

1. The situation in coastal communities

The Philippines has a total marine area of a little more than 1.5 million square kilometers, of which 266,000 square kilometers are coastal waters. The economic contribution of the fishing industry to the economy accounts for almost 5% of Gross National Product and provides jobs for more than one million Filipinos.

Many of the coastal areas are traditional fishing grounds which depend directly on a balance in the coastal and marine ecosystems and related ecosystems (mangroves, coral reefs, estuaries, sea grasses and lagoons) for their survival.

A critical analysis of the status of these ecosystems shows that they are in varying degrees of degradation. At present, a small percentage of the mangrove forests (less than 20%) and the coral reefs (less than 5%) could be said to be in good to excellent condition. The causes of the degradation of these valuable ecosystems can be attributed to the following: use of illegal fishing methods such as blast fishing and cyanide poisoning; conversion of mangroves to fishponds and prawn farms; and silting and pollution caused by domestic and industrial wastes. The poor condition of the watersheds adds to the amount of silt dumped into the rivers and seas.

As a result of the increasing pressure on coastal and marine resources, recent researches have shown that the individual catch of small-scale fisherfolk has not increased over the years. Instead, it has continued to dwindle. Fisherfolk are presently considered one of the poorest sectors in the country. The incidence of malnutrition is also high in fishing villages in comparison with the other villages in the country, although fish is considered the primary source of animal protein for Filipinos.

Two main reasons have been pointed out as the causes of the rapid degradation of fisheries and marine resources. One is *the absence or breakdown of a management and authority system whose main function is to introduce and enforce a set of norms and behaviors with regard to the sustainable use and development of coastal and marine resources.*

The fisheries and marine resources had been characterized as an "open access" resource. The result is the present unlimited exploitation of the resources through overfishing, the use of destructive fishing gear and the wanton dumping of wastes and pollutants in the coastal fishing grounds.

Another reason put forward is *fisherfolk's perception and cognition of their coastal resources system, which determines how they interact and interrelate with those resources.*

The sea is perceived as a dangerous and alien environment. Because of the uncertainty of the fishing environment, which means that a good catch is never guaranteed, and fisherfolk's disadvantaged position by virtue of not owning or controlling technology, capital and equipment, they tend to see fishing as a game of chance (*"suwerte"*). This is compounded by the belief that marine and fishery resources are generally common property that are not equally distributed in the sea, so that competition among the fisherfolk within and outside the community becomes stiffer. This situation results in an individualistic attitude, whereby each fisherman thinks that if he does not take the resource now, somebody else will get it. Hence, it does not matter whether he catches juvenile fish or employs illegal fishing methods as long as he gets there first.

On the other hand, cooperation also characterizes the lifestyle of fishing people. Cooperation is essential to reduce risks and ensure a bountiful catch. Usually, people fish in groups or at individual fishing sites which are near each other.[1]

2. The rationale behind the educational innovation

Fishing communities have long possessed an understanding of the ecosystem and the role they themselves play in the interrelationships between human beings and their coastal environments. However, as competition among fishermen escalates and the population in coastal communities continues to increase, the fishermen's actions toward their environment also changes. In order to survive in the mad scramble for control of resources, and to compete with large-scale fishery

[1] To some extent, fishing communities have developed informal structural arrangements such as clusters. In the Philippines, the clusters are usually composed of relatives who share a set of rules about the proper ways to fish and exchange information on the location of stocks. It is also these groups that contain information on illegal fishing. However, despite being a member of a cluster, a fisherman maintains a certain degree of secrecy so that he has some assurance of catching more fish than others.

vessels, small fishermen resort to using dynamite and cyanide for fishing, although they know that these things destroy fish habitats and lead to lower catches.

In order to re-establish the positive relationship between fisherfolk and their coastal and marine environments, there is a need to reconstruct the knowledge that they have at present about the ecosystems. This means making radical changes in the nature of their relationship with their resources. Their perception and their relationship with their environment are largely determined by the fact that they do not own the fisheries and marine resources. The fisherfolk's attitude of not taking into consideration future effects can only be altered if their sense of security over access to and control of the resources is ensured.

One way of ensuring the rights of the fisherfolk over their resources is through the practice of community-based coastal resource management (CB-CRM) whereby "the people themselves are provided the opportunity and/or responsibility to manage their own resources, define their needs, goals and aspirations and make decisions regarding their well-being." It is also a "participatory strategy whereby the locus of decision-making with regard to the sustainable use of natural resources in an area lies with the people in the communities of that area."

The training of coastal managers has become a growing concern among governmental, non-governmental and academic agencies, but these bodies either send their staff abroad or to local universities for academic training on environmental management. There is still a lack of concerted action on the part of both government and non-governmental agencies in focusing their attention on the small fishermen themselves.

This situation challenged Tambuyog Development Center (TDC) to launch a Fisherfolk Environmental Education Program. This educational program is a response to the lack of environmental education designed for the environmental awareness-building and skills training of the fisherfolk who are the major stakeholders in coastal communities. At the outset, the institution decided to focus on "creating and/or heightening *environmental awareness* among the fisherfolk, community members and development workers towards the rehabilitation, protection and conservation of their marine and coastal environments" because it was not equipped with the staff to train fisherfolk in *technical skills* on coastal resource management.[2] TDC thus decided that it would first initiate an *environmental awareness-building phase* for fisherfolk leaders, organization members and development workers in order to propagate environmental consciousness among coastal communities. This strategy would enable fisherfolk and community members to reflect on the present state of their environment and the nature of their interactions so that they could search for and formulate alternative ways of dealing with environmental problems. This phase was implemented from January 1991 to December 1993.

While the environmental awareness-building was being carried out, the TDC staff were enhancing their knowledge and skills on the more complex work of CB-CRM. This was done in preparation for the second phase of the Fisherfolk Environmental Education Program, which would center on "educating and sustaining fisherfolk coastal resource managers". This second phase of the educational program was primarily aimed at equipping fisherfolk leaders and community members with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to plan, implement,

---

[2] The institution had a long track record of consciousness-raising and facilitating the formation of fisherfolk organizations since it was established in 1984. However, in terms of technical expertise, it was still in the process of training its staff and building training teams with an interdisciplinary approach to CB-CRM.

monitor and evaluate sustainable CB-CRM programs for their particular areas or communities. This phase started in January 1994 and was expected to end in December 1996.

3. The underlying concept of innovation

The Fisherfolk Environmental Education Program (FEEP) is an example of innovative non-formal adult education because of the following reasons:

1. It sets out to contribute to the mitigation of the complex and serious problem of environmental degradation by raising awareness among local fisherfolk and enhancing their skill and self-confidence in managing and controlling their fishery and marine resources. Raising the awareness of the people has a more lasting effect than direct solutions such as advocating laws and policies that demand a high level of political will from local governments. In coastal villages around the Philippines, it is common for municipal governments to issue ordinances regarding the use and management of a particular resource, but most of these just remain on paper. Enhancing the awareness of the local people about the dangers and opportunities of their situation strengthens their ability to make demands, and their mobilization activities.

2. It attempts to develop coastal managers among the fisherfolk by equipping them with skills, knowledge and attitudes that integrate both "pure environmental science" and socio-ecological perspectives. In the past, environmental management studies had been limited to the circle of the so-called "fishery experts" and to those who enjoyed the benefits of formal schooling. The program aimed at popularizing the study of the environment by utilizing the indigenous knowledge of the fisherfolk.

4. The Fisherfolk Environmental Education Program

4.1. Objectives

The specific objectives of the first phase of FEEP were:

1. to provide fisherfolk organizations, community members and development workers with training for trainers ("Trainers' Training") on the functions, roles, status and problems of their marine and coastal environment, and

2. to produce and disseminate popular information and educational materials on the marine and coastal environments, both in printed and audio-visual form, to fisherfolk communities.

It was envisaged that the educational activities would help to enhance fisherfolk's confidence so that they could organize themselves and mobilize communities to act on issues related to their environment.

4.2. Program principles

The program is based on Tambuyog's belief that FEEP should not only lead to an understanding of what was happening to the fisherfolk's environment but should also challenge them to act on these issues. Below are the principles that the institution adhered to in implementing the environmental education for the fisherfolk:

1. Fishing communities and the people living in them could become the most effective coastal resource managers because they use and interact every day with coastal and marine resources.

2. Fisherfolk communities could only actively pursue resource management if their participation in the process of choosing alternatives to their destructive fishing activities were substantial and meaningful.

3. Active participation by the fisherfolk could only be realized if a partnership were forged with their grassroots organizations.

4. Environmental education among the fisherfolk should be inter-disciplinary, which means that it should not only deal with technical aspects of resource economics and ecology, but also tackle human relations issues such as resolving conflicts between stakeholders, managing group processes and advocacy.

5. Environmental education among the grassroots requires popular education techniques and methodologies.[3]

6. The content and methodology of environmental education should be culturally sensitive. It should start from the people's present knowledge and attitudes, which are a result of their continued struggle and interaction with their environment.

7. The results of the educational activities should be action-oriented. The training courses and seminars should help them to reflect on what affirmative action they could take toward their environment, given their potential and limitations.

4.3. Program components

To meet the objectives of FEEP, the first phase of the program adopted four main complementary components. These were chosen to meet the need for an integrative approach in which research, training materials development and monitoring and evaluation would complement each other, resulting in an educational program that was not static but continuously adapting to the particular situations of the participants.

---

[3] Since most of the target participants of the educational activities were people who had barely completed their elementary education, it was necessary to devise and develop learning methodologies and processes that would sustain their interest, especially by ensuring that the topics to be tackled were a combination of pure science and social science concepts.

Component 1: Seminar on Environmental Awareness (SEA)
The Seminar on Environmental Awareness (SEA) was the core component of the Fisherfolk Environmental Education Project. The SEA was basically designed to enable the fisherfolk to:

- have an understanding of the present status of the marine environment of the country,
- understand the basic ecological concepts, principles and interrelationships of the different ecosystems as applied to human situations,
- analyze the state of their local marine environment in order to identify the causes and effects of environmental degradation and destruction, and
- initially plan organizational action to protect, conserve and rehabilitate their fishery resources.

From the objectives, five major topics were developed:

1. basic concepts and principles of ecology and the ecosystem, and their importance for human existence
2. the coastal zone ecosystem, its characteristics and components and its importance to humankind
3. the economic and ecological functions of the coastal zone and marine ecosystem, and the stresses which they faced
4. the current state of the local and national coastal zone ecosystem, and
5. an alternative framework and possible solutions for the fisherfolk's management, restoration and the protection of their coastal zones.

The length of the seminar was approximately 36 hours. It was packaged into topics, each of which had its corresponding content and method. The teaching-learning methods usually used were activity-oriented, such as games, role play, group work and lecturette-discussions to synthesize the learning points. Visual presentations such as slides and posters comprised the training materials used. The action-oriented activities enabled participants "to learn by doing" and to reflect upon their own personal experiences when "scientific concepts" were being discussed. In the educational sessions, the facilitators of the seminars acted as enablers and animators to encourage the people to speak their minds.

Component 2: Training of environmental educators
The program also provided for the training of local environmental educators (Trainers' Training) among the ranks of the fisherfolk. The role of the environmental educators was seen as pivotal in achieving the multiplier effect of the program through the echo seminars which they would conduct later on in their respective communities.

Participants in the training of environmental educators were nominated and selected by their particular organizations.

Component 3: Research and educational materials
The setting-up of a research and educational materials development component was aimed at supplementing and complementing the environmental seminars. Research was undertaken to enable the facilitators to be updated on the latest information and developments in ecological

concerns. Secondly, the research results formed the basis for the development of training materials such as posters and comics.

The comics presented stories in illustrated form which dealt with environmental issues. Comic magazines are very popular in the country, both in urban and rural areas, because of the short stories they carry with which people easily identify.

A set of 5' x 5' (1500 x 1500 mm) instructional posters and charts to accompany each module were produced in canvas cloth to make it more interesting, stimulating and pleasant to the eye.

Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation component was two-pronged: "training-oriented", which refers to the evaluation of the project on the basis of its educational objectives, and "program-oriented", which refers to the evaluation of the project on the basis of its expected outcomes, particularly the impact of training local environmental educators and the activities actually conducted by the fisherfolk organizations as a result of the educational activities.

The project also devised mechanisms to monitor the performance of the "trained" environmental educators. The monitoring and evaluation component was set up in order to have constant links and follow-up for the local environmental educators to appraise their effectiveness in conducting seminars and to share their strengths and limitations in facilitating the said seminars.

4.4. Funding, staffing and organizational structure

The Fisherfolk Environmental Education Project secured funding from the MacArthur Foundation.[4] The project was implemented under the responsibility of the Training and Education Desk coordinator. Five full-time staff and one part-timer made up the workforce, plus an artist who worked with the team from time to time to develop and make visuals and as a consultant for the production of the comics.[5]

4.5. Monitoring and evaluation of the project

The effectiveness of FEEP, especially its core component, the Seminar on Environmental Awareness, was measured against three levels of outcome: immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and ultimate outcomes.

Level I (immediate outcomes) considered participants' judgements on the content of the seminar or training course, training aids and methodology, and training management. It also examined the concepts and skills learned by participants from the training or seminar. Below are some excerpts from the thoughts which participants expressed during the evaluation sessions immediately following the seminars:

---

4 The Foundation's commitment was to fund the program for three years, and it granted an amount of $120,000 as its implementing budget.

5 The radio program, *Radio Lundayan*, a project also run by this department, discussed the environmental awareness modules regularly. The program was on the air for 30 minutes every day from Monday to Saturday.

"I came to know that the bounties of the sea have their limits."

"I couldn't imagine how commercial vessels contribute to the destruction of our marine resources. Now, I am more conscious of it. However, I could not easily criticize the use of this kind of fishing because I also need this job to feed my family."

"When I was only five years old, fishermen in my place only used very simple fishing techniques. My parents just caught fish in the nearby mangrove areas. I know that the mangroves are important fish habitats. We need to stop the cutting of mangrove trees to bring back the fish again."

Level II, asessing intermediate outcomes, dealt with changes in attitudes and skills, and initial applications of what had been learned in terms of changed behavior. Unlike the evaluation of "immediate outcomes", which occurred right after the seminar had been conducted, evaluation for "intermediate outcomes" took place from three months to one year after the seminar had been conducted. It was usually done through field visits, interviews with the participants and discussions with the organizations to which they belonged. Some of the results of the evaluation were the following:

"...the realization that I had after the seminar contributed to my active participation in the establishment of the Barangay Resource Management Council, the campaign for "*Bantay Dagat*" and the setting-up of a fish sanctuary in our place."

"The other members of the organization who attended the seminar have exhibited changes in their attitude toward the lake. They have become more conscious in not throwing their garbage and other waste into the lake. They have also developed self-confidence in reprimanding the other people who continue to do otherwise."

"This new-found awareness pushed me to disseminate information on environmental awareness. As the chairperson of our village, I came up with an information drive on lake ecology awareness through discussions in gatherings and meetings."

Level III (ultimate outcomes) dealt with the program's impact on the organization and the community as a whole, with regard to their positive action on the environment. Since there was no comprehensive evaluation of the program, Tambuyog found it hard to determine the "ultimate outcomes". Interviews with the staff could only give some indications because the environmental education program was only one of the many factors which might have influenced fisherfolk's attitudes toward their resources and their organizations.

5. The process of implementation and planning for adoption

5.1. Training design

The content of the Seminar on Environmental Awareness, which included five topics (see 4.3., Component 1), was chosen on the basis of an assessment of the environmental awareness needs

of the fisherfolk and those who were working with coastal communities. The first two main topics were basic knowledge on environmental situations and ecological systems. These topics dealt with processes and principles that cannot be observed without the aid of scientific apparatus. The challenge, therefore, was to transform them into learning packages that would suit the level of the grassroots. The next two topics discussed more immediate realities and processes that occur in the coastal areas. The fifth topic discussed the options and the alternative actions that had been carried out in the past and the present for environmental protection, rehabilitation, conservation and management.

A pre-test seminar was conducted in mid-April, after four months of research and consultations. It involved two groups, one being NGO workers who had completed at least 14 years of formal schooling, the other being fisherfolk who had only a very limited background of formal schooling. The pre-test seminar was conducted primarily to gauge whether the *content* and the *training methods* used were within the *context* of the fisherfolk. The pre-test seminars also determined whether "scientific or technical terms" in environmental studies could be translated into the "common language" widely used and understood by the majority of the fisherfolk.

The pre-test seminar was not enough to make a final training design and content. Hence, the training team agreed that in the first year of the implementation of the project, all seminars that were conducted should be considered as pre-test activities to enable the design and content to evolve.

It was agreed among the training team that regular assessment of the training was to be used to determine changes and additions in each training seminar to be given. Each seminar experimented with various training methodologies to suit the interests and concerns of the participants.

5.2. Actors in the program and their roles

There were three main groups of actors in the program, namely, *Tambuyog as an institution* (represented by the education and training staff), which had initiated the environmental educational program, the *fisherfolk organizations* as the target participants/beneficiaries of the program, and the *development workers* who could be influenced to spread the environmental education program to other areas.

Tambuyog Development Center had approached NACFAR (Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolk for Aquatic Reforms) and PAMALAKAYA, an active member of the coalition, to be the partners in this educational program. They were chosen because of their main political agenda of pushing for reforms in the fisheries and maritime industry. These organizations worked for the principle that aquatic resources should be reserved for the utilization and management of the people who directly derive their livelihood from them.[6]

Another important group was the development workers who came from both governmental and non-governmental organizations working with coastal communities and carrying out various program strategies. Since these people worked directly in coastal communities, influencing and persuading them to integrate environmental awareness and action

---

[6] Aside from their political agenda, these organizations were also chosen because of their wide membership. NACFAR was composed of seven major fisherfolk organizations in the country, PAMALAKAYA being one of them.

into their present work, they could extend the reach of the program. Moreover, in terms of concrete action on environmental issues, development workers in the communities could help to sustain the initiatives of the people since it is their task to provide material, financial and other support.

5.3. Partnership with local fisherfolk organizations and NGOs

To make the seminars and training courses a starting point for long-term partnership with NGOs and people's organizations on environmental work, the whole training process from needs analysis to monitoring was discussed and agreed upon by Tambuyog's training team and the partner organizations. Through this scheme, partner organizations had major roles in the training process and their functions were not limited to requesting implementation. Also, Tambuyog encouraged the organizations to monitor the environmental action of the fisherfolk and to help them in their mobilizations and campaigns.

5.4. Training materials

To expand the reach of environmental awareness to cover fisherfolk who did not attend the seminar, the project produced a 45-minute documentary on the national environmental situation. At the same time, it wrote five comics on environmental issues (oil spill, mangrove conversion, coral reef destruction, and deforestation). The comics were published quarterly and were distributed to the partner NGOs and organizations throughout the country. Broadcasting was also used in the promotion of environmental awareness. The radio program of Tambuyog produced environmental modules for its program *Ecology on the Air*.

Among other educational means, comics as a print medium and radio as the broadcast medium were used because these two forms are the main source of entertainment in the coastal villages. Comics are widely read in the coastal villages as in any other village in the country. The comics contain short stories related to the realities or the aspirations of the common people. Since the stories could be finished in one sitting and used the common popular language, they were a success among the fisherfolk.

6. Project outcomes: Changes made and challenges met

After its first year of implementation, 12 seminars had been conducted in various locations in the country, with a total of 300 participants.

Because of the different contexts in which the Seminar on Environmental Awareness was conducted, adjustments in the modules were made according to the different types of fishing grounds in the country. The "context-content method" was adopted as a strategy to suit the different political, economic, cultural and environmental contexts of the fisherfolk.

As a result of the first year of implementation of the project, three types of the Seminar on Environmental Awareness were developed for each specific fishing activity: traditional, commercial (designed for fishworkers), and inland fishing (designed for lake fisherfolk). It was only after these modules were developed that the Trainers' Training for environmental educators was designed. The Trainers' Training, which was fully implemented in the second and third year of the project, was developed in order to deepen the understanding of the

fisherfolk educators about environmental and ecological concepts, principles and issues. At the same time, equal importance was placed on equipping them with skills and techniques in participatory training methods and popular education.

In the second year of the Seminar on Environmental Awareness, the need for a second level of training became very evident. The fisherfolk leaders proposed a type of educational session that would equip the fisherfolk with the necessary skills in transforming environmental consciousness into concrete action. Assessments of the SEA showed that the fisherfolk found the 5th module (Alternative Framework and Actions Open to the Fisherfolk) inadequate since it only discussed options which had been implemented by other fisherfolk organizations.

Plans to implement the second phase of the education program were made. It was called the "Resource Management Advocates Capability-Building Training", with the main objective of equipping resource management advocates with the knowledge and skills needed to establish resource management councils in their villages. In essence, its purpose was to train coastal managers among the ranks of the fisherfolk themselves. Resource management councils (RMCs) were seen by the fisherfolk as the organizational expression of their community action on resource rehabilitation, conservation and protection, and social mobilization.

Unlike the SEA, the Capability-Building Training was more skills training than a consciousness-raising educational exercise. It was addressed to organized fisherfolk who had finished the SEA and planned to organize resource management councils in their villages in the next six months, and to those who were presently forming organizations in the cause of resource management.

6.1. Strengths, problem areas and lessons learned

To date, there is still no comprehensive formal evaluation of the project either by internal or external evaluators. However, the training team made mid-year and end-of-year evaluations regularly when the project was running.[7]

A review of the annual written reports and documents of the project showed that aside from "enhancing the environmental awareness of the participants", the environmental education sessions that were conducted had also served as:

- an educational component in specific environmental campaigns. An example was the campaign to implement a close season in Manila Bay for large-scale, active fishing vessels such as trawlers. The seminar that was conducted for fisherfolk around Manila Bay served as an "eye-opener" for those of them who had initially opposed the campaign because by implementing the ban on trawling, their main source of livelihood would be jeopardized;

- a consolidating activity for organizations which had experienced a relative slump in activities;

---

[7] After three years of implementation, the project had conducted a total of 40 seminars and training courses in which over 2,000 fisherfolk and non-governmental development workers involved in the fishery sector had participated. The participants came from almost all the strategic bays and lakes of the country. This number does not include the echo seminars which had been conducted by the participants themselves in their own local settings.

- a forum for fostering networking relationships with the other fisherfolk organizations and institutions.

According to the staff, the most problematic area they encountered over and over again was time. The approximate time of 36 hours that was set aside for the conduct of the seminar was not always observed if the seminar started at around 10:00 in the morning. At around 2:00 in the afternoon, the fishermen would excuse themselves since they still had to prepare to fish again at 4:00 p.m. They sent their wives and their eldest sons or daughters to be their replacements in the sessions which they missed.

To remedy this, the training staff had two options: to select a venue that was far from their fishing activity with the consent of the participants, or to conduct the seminar in a staggered manner right in the middle of the fishing village.

The second option, although it entailed more working time for the project staff, proved to be more effective. The strategy of bringing the training seminars right to the middle of the fishing villages not only increased the number of areas covered, but tripled the number of participants. This could be attributed to the following factors:

1. The seminar turned out to be non-exclusive. Since the venue was usually in the center of the village, anyone interested was free to observe and participate in the sessions. Women could attend the sessions, bringing their small children with them.

2. There was homogeneity in the participants' backgrounds and experience, similarity in the ecological issues confronted, and commonality in language and symbols. The facilitators did not need to "break the ice" between the participants.

6.2. *Gender perspective*

Only about 30% of the participants were women. In the three years of project implementation, only two sessions were held exclusively for women fishers. Although the reports made by the staff revealed that the seminars became a "venue wherein women's roles and participation in relation to community-based resource management were discussed and that in the seminars, they affirmed their roles and equal responsibility for their fishery resources, because they were also the direct and indirect resource users," little effort had been exerted to maximize women's participation in the seminars and activities.

A review of the content and methodologies of the training reveals that the assumed participants were exclusively fisher*men*. Among other areas for development, this portion of the educational program should be seriously considered. Fishing villages have low regard for women's activities, yet it is these activities that enable families and households to cope with the everyday pressures brought about by environmental degradation. In their everyday activities of looking for fuel, fodder, water and food, they are in constant interaction with their environment. In situations of severe environmental degradation, it is the women who suffer most through longer working hours and more household problems.

7. Responses from the stakeholders

After the end of the seminar or training course, the initial responses of the participants would range from doubt, anger and denial to happiness and hope. These responses surfaced when the participants were made to choose from the cut-out figures of fish with different facial expressions. They had to take the fish with the expression that best described their feelings after finishing the seminar. However, these feelings changed as they returned to their usual tasks.

Interviews and discussions with them two or three years after participating in a seminar showed that they could still remember some topics that were discussed. Some of the participants interviewed said that:

> "Some of the things we learned were not taught to us in schools. Among the topics which I could best remember were those which dealt with the different marine resources such as the coral reefs and the mangroves, the roles of the different parts of the ecosystem and the state of our environment, here and now. I couldn't possibly forget these things. Why? Because these are what we experience in real life. We ourselves are witness to the destruction of the coral reefs and the dwindling of our catch." (Noriel Patricio Pasacao, Camarines Sur)

> "The best things which I can recall from the seminar were those which dealt with the ecosystem — the living and the non-living aspects, including myself, and its inter-relationships, the sea and its characteristics and the corals and mangroves. I still remember these things now because of their relevance not only to our husbands, but also to us, their wives. Also, I fully understood the various ecological concepts not because of the way they were explained, but from what I have observed in actual life." (Judith Micoleta Pasacao, Camarines Sur)

Others pointed out that the training methods used enabled them to remember certain topics. One participant disclosed that:

> "When I see the children in the backyard play games such as "*Hulihin si Haring Agila*", which the facilitator also made us do, I remember the concept of energy, food pyramid and food chain." (Tay Manny, an old fisherman from Oton, Iloilo)

The training also provided a new lesson which they had ignored in the past:

> "Before the seminar was conducted in our village...the coral reefs for me then were just piles of rocks at the bottom of the sea. Not until after the seminar had I realized that corals were alive and served as food and shelter to the little fishes and the other creatures that help maintain life at sea. Since then, I refrained from taking coral heads out of their habitat." (Ramon Roxas, a young fisherman from Batangas)

On the personal level, the seminar had also changed participants' perceptions of their resources. Before, as one of the fisherfolk noted, they used to carelessly dump their garbage near the lake. After several sessions with them on lake ecology, they started to become

conscious. If they saw someone throw garbage near the lakeshore or into the lake itself, they would scold him or her for "destroying the lake's ecology".

One sea fisherman from Zambales even stopped using dynamite and a compressor after realizing that it would not pay off considering its long-term effect on the corals and other marine life, although his catch definitely decreased. Another became an active participant in the *barrio* resource management council and the "*Bantay Dagat*" (Guardians of the Sea) as a result of his reflections on the seminar.

Aside from the effect on individuals' behavior, attitudes and perceptions of their resources, the participants who attended the seminar shared what they learned with their families and their friends. A woman fish-seller who was also an active member of her cooperative formed an informal discussion group among her fellow sellers, who were curious about what she learned when she went to a seminar together with the men.

The change in attitude toward the environment was also reflected in the actions of organizations. According to Ka Resty, a fisherfolk leader of San Pablo's Seven Lakes:

> "After the seminar, our organization had this "*Linis Dagat*" campaign in which the people in the village were mobilized to clear the lakeshore of garbage and plastics. Through the help of our *Barrio* Captain, we enforced an ordinance prohibiting the disposal of waste and garbage near the shoreline."

Fisherfolk in the lakes of San Pablo who attended the seminar conducted a lake-wide clearing of water lilies and decaying fish cages in their *barrios* as part of an environmental campaign. In Cuenca, Batangas, the fisherfolk formed groups to watch for illegal encroachers in their fishing grounds. Other groups planted trees in watersheds and a campaign was launched to put an end to illegal fishing methods.

However, as the months passed by, the enthusiasm to implement environmental activities waned. The community and the members of the organizations were only active when the seminars were fresh in their minds. Although destructive fishing methods and the throwing of garbage were minimized, the organizations seemed to slow down in their campaigns. One person observed that environmental consciousness alone was not enough. The organizations needed a strong will for certain types of action which demand commitment and technical know-how. Aside from this, the organizations and the communities needed support from other organizations if alternatives to the destructive fishing methods and resource use were to be implemented. What was needed, according to a fisherfolk leader from Barili, was "wider support from the farmers, the workers, the public and the private sectors because the cause of the fishing communities was the cause of all other sectors since the life-support systems of these sectors are all inter-related."

The various non-governmental agencies that were participating in the various training courses and seminars reported that they were also implementing environmental awareness education and information campaigns in the communities where they operated. Some NGOs in the south had even translated the modules into different dialects and made changes in the instructional content to suit the specific contexts of the fisherfolk in the different islands of Visayas and Mindanao.

8. Concluding reflections

In this innovation in environmental education, the study of the environment was a combination of environmental studies and popular education which sought to create a strong link between the physical and chemical environments and humankind. From the experience of the project, the following principles of innovative environmental education for fisherfolk can be put forward:

1. It should recognize that there is a relationship between economic, cultural, political, social and environmental issues. It should emphasize both man-made and natural variables (e.g., typhoons, disasters, calamities) as factors which contribute to the destruction of the environment.

2. It should be non-formal, popular education *for* the marine and coastal environment and inter-related ecosystems. Educational sessions should not be *limited* to creating or enhancing environmental awareness, and what is learnt should lead fisherfolk to committed action for the rehabilitation, protection and the conservation of their fisheries and aquatic resources.

3. It should also deal with the appropriate technical and intellectual skills needed to provide feasible alternative action so that the sustainability of the fishery and other aquatic resources does not conflict with the economic needs of the fisherfolk and their families.

TRANSVERSAL ISSUES

Change and Integration

by *S.B. Ekanayake, Werner Mauch, Catherine Alum Odora-Hoppers*

Participation and Partnership, Sustainability and Transferability

by *Rachel Bélisle, Dipta Bhog, Ingrid Jung .*

The Needs Issue

by *Maria A. Consuegra, Khalfan Mazrui, Josef Muller*

Conversation on Empowerment

by *Uta Papen, Rosa Saavedra, M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling, Miryan Zuñiga*

In the Guise of a Conclusion: New Ways of Learning

by *Dipta Bhog, Uta Papen*

CHANGE AND INTEGRATION

S.B. Ekanayake, Werner Mauch and Catherine Alum Odora-Hoppers

Innovation is a process of initiating change in order to resolve a problematic situation. In the case studies, the problematic situation(s) exist at various levels. These levels are interlinked but have different emphases and can be identified as "crisis situations". All the case studies, however, aim at improving the well-being of the individual and the society by initiating new modes and forms of intervention in the life-worlds of the learners. In this regard, innovation as a process of initiating change is always preceded by processes of consolidation and integration. This consolidation can take place at the level of the individual or the project, and can indicate either internal or external assimilation.

1. The crisis background

Several "crisis" situations can be discerned from the case studies. They range from shortfalls at paradigmatic levels and crises in socio-economic contexts, to interpersonal relations, and to the construction of meanings and attitudes. In the cases of GREAT (Sri Lanka), CAFAED (Colombia), AETTC (Kenya), and UPMRC (Palestine), the existing education, development, and health paradigms are seen to contain major gaps or omissions. The MS (India), QC (Canada), the FEEP (Philippines), TFD (Cameroon), and WGTA? (Chile) projects, on the other hand, recognize crisis situations in the socio-economic and cultural spheres. Meanwhile conflicts in interpersonal relations are a particular focus in the WGTA? (Chile) case, and MS looks at the issue of interpersonal relations from a gender and caste point of view. GREAT, on the other hand, deals with this crisis in terms of the lack of understanding between university graduates and rural communities.

In the case of GREAT (Sri Lanka), existing approaches to development are felt to be in conflict with people's perspectives. They are characterized by lack of insight into human behaviour and people's creative potential. On the other hand, universities are modelled on the traditional framework, focusing on theoretical pedagogy and devoid of practical content or wisdom concerning people's knowledge. In terms of the societal context, GREAT recognizes that no programmes, instruction model or methods exist to meet these challenges and train students in social dynamics and rural reality. The graduates' limited knowledge of the context extends to their limited knowledge of the attitudes, expectations and abilities of local communities. Yet, after graduation, they are somehow supposed to acquire all these skills by trial and error. The main aim of GREAT is to bring about change in existing educational and development thinking and practice, which have deep roots in the Western model.

In terms of methodology, participatory training skills are not practised in universities, and neither is space provided for this approach. Top-down approaches in development planning have ritualized contextual insensitivity and led to the non-recognition of diversity. On the other hand, deductive approaches and deterministic models typical of Western approaches to delivery continue to dominate most formal processes. Stagnant development which has failed to adopt indigenous and endogenous approaches to development are commonplace. These programmes

use and apply models that have no basis in the cultural context but which assume universalism and homogeneity as a basis of planning. GREAT presents non-formal education as a development tool and introduces new dimensions to adult education.

The Colombian project CAFAED aims at bringing about a change in the traditional approaches to adult education. The traditional educational paradigm sees people as "machines" and productive resources rather than as human beings. The underlying concept of education in CAFAED is that education is a process that leads an individual towards personal growth and development.

In Quebec (Canada), changes in the wider societal context that began with the decline in Catholic values and the rise of secularization led to a change in gender roles and the break-up of family patterns. From a situation of social disapproval of working women, the context changed to the loss of esteem for women who stay at home. In QC, the project focuses on the notion of "work" in both family, community life, and the world of work. The concept of work used in the public sphere is particularly problematic not only because it devalues "unpaid work", but especially because such devaluation affects the status of women more than men. QC extends the frontiers of adult education by developing tools for recognizing individual competencies. This is done by encouraging individuals to develop new definitions of the work they do in daily life, and using these as a basis for naming their areas of competency in the labour market. In QC, the problematic concept is the notion of "work". The traditional understanding of "work" is narrowly restricted to "paid labour". Related to this is also the fact that women's labour is unrecognized, and therefore naturally unpaid, which is a basic element of the modern capitalist economy. The sensitizing theory in the project is feminist theory, which challenges the separation between the public and the private, and the personal and the political.

The socio-cultural and economic background in the Indian case, MS, reflects a typical rural community in India with poverty and caste as the basic background components. The majority of the people are illiterate and the literacy rate among women is very low. Over and above all this there is also violence. The most seriously affected group are the women. MS aims at bringing a social transformation through a transfer of technical skills and literacy to women.

The major elements in the MS programme are related to encouraging collective processes of learning, building self-confidence and setting up horizontal linkages through a participatory process. In this process, learning forms the basis of the training programmes as learning is the outcome of a process involving transactions between people and their environment, leading to resolution of conflicts, and the creation of change in their knowledge structures. The changes expected from the women are mainly related to enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem in order to enable them to become active partners in the process of societal change. The strategy adopted in MS is training women as hand-pump mechanics. This activity created new roles and new perspectives for the women while breaking down stereotypes: "We thought we were going to be more in the nature of helpers who hold the tools or merely assist while the male mechanics would undertake the main repair work."

In Cameroon, Theatre-for-Development moves theatre from the Western paradigm to its functional use within traditional societies. The project recognizes that the definition of legitimate theatre work, and attitudes to African performing arts, need to change. Methodology needs also to be revisited, and avenues for self-validation created for marginalized groups. Theatre work should focus on community needs and problems rather than on abstraction. The

definition of "traditional" should not be restricted to "rural", but also to peri-urban communities. New linkages that build on endogenous knowledge should be fostered, and the omniscience of the city bureaucrat countered.

WGTA? (Chile) is a project that focuses on the significance of interactions between couples and enables them to reflect upon their personal problems and conflicts. The socio-economic background of the project stems from the critical years under the military regime, when unemployment was high and women had to find additional income and work outside their homes. This brought about conflicts among the partners related to overworking, personal frustration and lack of personal security and self-esteem. WGTA? was developed to provide assistance for poor families that were suffering the consequences of this situation. The project is premised on a positive notion of the family, and aims at diagnosing and devising ways of overcoming crises in marital relations.

The overall frame of reference for intended change in AETTC (Kenya) is provided by the high illiteracy rate among the population, which is perceived as an obstacle to the development of the nation. In the UPMRC case, on the other hand, the (working) paradigm is that of health: the traditional understanding of health follows a biological, instrumentalist model, while the educational concept of UPMRC understands health as a social construct. In the Philippine case of the FEEP programme, the ensuing crisis is that of ecological degradation, overexploited resources, growing inflation rates, decline in real income, malnutrition, population increase and a general breakdown in management and authority systems.

2. Concepts of change

From these various crisis situations, a number of strategic concepts of change emerge. TFD, GREAT, MS and FEEP use *endogenousness* as a concept of change, while the notion of *generic skills and competencies* is pertinent to QC, but is also applied in one form or the other in GREAT, MS, TFD and WGTA?. *Health as a social construct* emerges distinctly in the Palestinian case, while *access and equality* are key concepts in AETTC (Kenya), CAFAED and to some extent, in MS. All the case studies gravitate around the notion of developing *human potential*.

Endogenousness as a concept emanates from the assumption that existing paradigms are rooted in exogenous models. In GREAT, the concept of change is directed at the notion of people's power and human potential. Non-formal education is seen as a framework, avenue and path of change, and the GREAT project is an experiment in capacitation for participatory planning, collaborative work and gaining of insights in order to address these issues.

The generic skills and concepts of competency used in QC are responses to the narrow and restricted meaning given to the notion of "work" which is commonly associated only with paid labour. QC's starting point of intervention is the very opposite of the deficit approach in that it relies specifically on what adults *possess*. The work that women do is not only unpaid, but is also held in low esteem.

Similarly, to see health as a social and political construct is a reaction to the narrow meaning given in contemporary medical practice, which defines health only in clinical and biological terms.

In the Fisherfolk project, the focus of change is on creating awareness of the environment among the fisherfolk and bringing about "affirmative action" on the environment. The project attempts to combine "environmental education with a strong social ecological perspective". Prior to the initiation of this project illegal fishing methods had been adopted by the fisherfolk which had destroyed the ecosystem, through silting and pollution. In addition, the catches had not increased over the years, resulting in incidences of malnutrition. This is the background against which this project conceived of change focusing on awareness of "community-based coastal resource management".

The WGTA? approach is unconventional. It is a process in which the couples were confronted with their own problems. The innovative features of this project relate to the themes, materials, methods and organization. The objective is to bring changes in the relationship between the couple. The project uses Freirian methods to achieve these changes. The core of the innovation reflects a democratic and humanist process. It also brings out "egalitarian relationships between men and women". The relationship between participants and educators is horizontal, allowing both to intervene actively in the programme. In the workshops, there were a number of stages which young couples had to follow and which brought out their inner conflicts. These related to communication, sexuality and pregnancy. The project's contributions were related to developing the personality of the individual and of the community at large. They were able to discover their gender roles and male chauvinist attitudes and the manner in which they should interact during intimate situations. The discussion in the workshops concerned the reasons why the couples got together, how they felt at that moment, their methods of communication and the significance of the fact that the "couple is not an island".

In CAFAED, change is intended to embrace the individual participant in the programme on the one hand, and the "traditional paradigm in adult education in Colombia" on the other. Whereas the former is conceived of as an adult "who will become a fundamental element in building the state that he expects to have, in order to change his surroundings and declare his cultural identity", the latter should be modified according to the principles of "pedagogy for development". At the heart of this concept is the human being "who can become a person with the ability to think and act", while the underlying concept of development "is understood as the constant evolution toward well-being and...quality of life through the creation of economic, social, human and institutional conditions". Through education, the individual is able to create new links to the community of which she/he is part. This should help to build a society in which the individual can develop her/his potential and competencies. There is a dialectical relationship between the well-being of the society and of the individual. The competent and capacitated individual contributes to the wealth and welfare of the society, and the society develops further towards standards of general justice and democracy, sustaining common human values and thereby reinforcing genuine human development.

The key pedagogical concept is that of "learning" as opposed to "instruction". Through the model of the human being used by CAFAED, the focus of education is on the development of the intellect and potential as a tool for enhancing the material (social, economic and cultural) base. Through the pursuit of common human values, the individual is integrated into the society and the society develops into an integral and integrative organism consisting of sound components and limbs. The common human values thus provide the organizing principle for the constitution of both the individual and the society. Their acceptance and pursuit are

considered as the motor of development, which is in turn seen as a constant evolution towards the fulfilment of humanistic ideas and ideals.

Education here is the tool for enhancing these humanistic values, enabling people to participate in the community. Through acquisition of an *equivalent* diploma, the disadvantaged and marginalized can become or at least feel equal to those privileged by successful use of the formal school system. This helps to raise participants' self-esteem and self-confidence and to reduce feelings of alienation and marginalization. The underlying working model is given by the family, seen as the germ and heart of a functioning society. The didactic principles of the educational practice fostered by CAFAED, which includes alternating phases of individual study and group work, are derived clearly from the model outlined of a dialectic evolution of individual and collective understanding and practice.

3. Strategies for change

In the process of finding innovative solutions to the shortfalls or crisis situations, the case studies devise and apply different strategies for change. *Exposure* is a strategy for change used especially in GREAT, but it is evident in the exposure of the women to technology in MS, and in the community-based approaches in the Palestinian case. *Communication* is a strategy central to QC and WGTA?, to Theatre-for-Development and MS. *Training* is a change strategy used effectively in the CAFAED and AETTC projects, and more informally in GREAT and MS. All projects in the case studies stress *skills development* and *awareness-raising*; but this is particularly emphasized in the MS, FEEP, and Theatre-for-Development projects.

In GREAT, the strategy for change involves an internship for graduates, strengthening micro-planning skills, and enhancing participatory techniques in gaining knowledge and insights in preference to questionnaires and statistical means. Exposure is a method of gaining experience and knowledge which strengthens interaction and communication between the graduates and the community. The role of the graduates also changes from that of owners of knowledge to listeners and animators through a model of interaction that emphasizes evolution rather than revolution as a strategy for bringing about change. The project aims at changing views and realities, introducing flexibility in learning methods and processes, improving adaptability in graduates, and fostering innovation that builds upon, and brings out the best in the system in terms of thought and practice.

University graduates are introduced to new domains of thinking, new premises for thought and practice, and for the first time in history, graduates at university level are targeted as learners within the framework of adult education. The limitations of the formal educational system and training are identified, and GREAT devises strategies to overcome these problems. In the process of capacitating the learners, the culture of learning is enriched.

In QC, conceptual change strategies introduce the concept of generic skills and competencies. Methodological strategies include a change in approach from "prior learning assessment" that typifies the formal education system, to the notion of "recognition". From "talking" and "teaching", to "listening". Moreover, the listening is not only to spoken words, but also to sensibilities, looks, and vibrations. It is a non-formal type of recognition, a process that requires humility, sensitivity and energy. The strategies for change also emphasize the people's existing knowledge (denoting strength), rather than their deficiencies (which is the starting point in the usual practice of formal education). They move away from the

standardizing approaches of the formal educational system to highlighting individual capacity as a basis for learning; and move from the formal system's (exclusive) concern with content to learners as a focal point.

In the TFD project, theatre is the framework of change for community conscientization and mobilization, and for fostering integrated rural development. But theatre also brings into play new ways of looking at development, which go further than challenging existing structures. The strategy is that of a move away from a radical ideological approach, to a "modernizing" approach to change: "theatre does not have to be confrontational." The shift also extends to the objective of theatre work, which changes from being seen as subversive to being an agent for engendering "new ways of seeing".

The Fisherfolk project (FEEP) uses a participatory strategy which helps "change to be firmly fixed with the people in the communities". The three critical elements used in this process of change are the resources, the people, and management strategies. The project therefore attempts to reconstruct the present knowledge of the fisherfolk at a positive level (replacing a negative and non-committed situation). It helps to bring about changes in the responsibilities of the people

The training of adult education teachers in the Kenyan project AETTC is done through a distance education course. As a consequence of the former experiences with literacy campaigns (which did not follow the principles of *functional* literacy), and building upon the experiences made in an in-service training course for primary teachers, the programme is implemented by building the necessary infrastructure and institutions. The curriculum is developed by the responsible Department of Adult Education. For the target group (trained teachers), change is especially brought about in their status. The final beneficiaries are the non-literates who should be enabled to participate actively in the daily life of the community and the state.

4. Agents of change

In all the case studies, three main categories of agents of change can be identified: *organizers/project initiators*, *participants*, and *institutions*. The role and the function of the agents of change vary according to the concept of and strategy for change applied in the project. The agents of change in the GREAT project are the graduates themselves, the universities, the Non-Formal Department of the National Institute of Education on the one hand, and the communities and the centre coordinators on the other. In TFD, the agents of change are the local communities, resource persons and animators, and indirectly the agencies that provide financial support to such initiatives. In AETTC, change is intended on the part of the teachers, who should follow the principles of functional literacy. The adult education teachers should then serve as the tool for enhancing literacy among the non-literate population. Change is necessary on the part of the institutions.

In the Palestinian case, the health workers are the principle agents of change, in collaboration with the communities. The agents of change in MS, FEEP, QC, CAFAM, and WGTA? are the trainers, organizers and participants.

5. Integration

Integration is understood in the context of the case studies as complementary to the process of change. It can also be seen as an effect and consequence of change. Integration takes place at two levels: the *project level*, and the *individual level*. At both levels, integration can be identified as an internal process of assimilation of new ideas, or as an external process which has an impact on the society, which it imbues with its innovative ideas.

In GREAT, change and integration are evident in the mindset of the participants, and in the systemic response to this innovation. Universities found a new link with local communities and the state. Within the national educational structure, the recognition given to GREAT is seen in its adoption as national policy. At the University of Colombo, a training programme on the professional development of graduates has been launched, using the ideas developed by GREAT. The result is enhanced creativity, listening skills, patience, adaptability and respect for the community, and improved links between local structures and state structures of authority. Other skills learned are in the area of conflict resolution, and use of resources.

The integration process in QC is multidimensional. The numbers increased from 100 participants to nearly 10,000. The ideas developed by QC also spread in different directions, into programmes in other adult education programmes as well as industry. At the personal level, the upgrading of skills through discovery of competence and appropriation of new vocabulary enhanced individual potential, leading to greater self-esteem and openness in interpersonal and family relationships. However, challenges to integration were also experienced, such as societal resistance to a broadening of the concept of work to include work performed in the community or private spheres; and some members of the emerging network found it difficult to grasp the core ideas of the project: work and recognition.

In the TFD programme, apprehension and uncertainty remain as to which approach is actually better. Can Theatre-for-Development be apolitical? Is there really a possibility of invigorating rural communities with a sense of belonging in a situation which, at best, treats them with benign neglect? Do the techniques of TFD work? What dynamics of power constitute theatre for the oppressed, and how do they sustain or subvert traditional structures of power? TFD proposes that the best way around this is to continue to re-invent the methodology in the light of changes in community needs, and in state pressure and threats. This mobile strategy is both a survival strategy and one of sustaining process evaluation as a strategic component in the constant flux between the processes of change and integration.

The results of WGTA? reflect the importance of the process, the way the partners felt about themselves and their capacity to be leaders in the workshops planned later for other couples. The numerical expansion of the project is also a testimony to the degree of acceptance by Chilean society. The gender roles of the Chilean couples changed as a result of this project. "Change has to begin little by little within the home... We do not have to wait for changes in society... For example, if the mother gets sick, she may ask her son to prepare a cup of tea for her..." This quotation exemplifies the role change which resulted from this project.

In principle, the relationship between the individual and the community in the CAFAED project can be analyzed as follows: individual capacitation contributes automatically to collective development, and *vice versa*. The focus of education is on individual competencies, and social development appears as a function or consequence of individual growth. The underlying model of development is thus social integration brought about by individual change through reinforcement of values.

The Philippine project also enabled the fisherfolk to look at issues in an interdisciplinary manner, and incorporated aspects related to the resolution of conflicts. The components selected to enhance the fisherfolk were of an integrative nature and included research, training in materials development, monitoring and evaluation. All this led to changes in the mindset of the people, reflected in statements such as: "We need to stop the cutting of mangrove trees to bring back the fish again," and, "We have become more conscious in not throwing our garbage and other waste into the lake." The integration of these changes was also seen in the training designs and draft modules that were developed for the seminars conducted for the fisherfolk. It could be seen that changes resulted in the consolidation of processes and institutions. Changes in the individuals and the groups related to attitudes, skills, perceptions and roles. The project went on to fix these changes as part of people's lasting responsibilities. In that the project developed the fisherfolk as coastal managers, they acquired responsibilities for which they had to develop the necessary attitudes and social awareness.

In MS, the successful integration resulted in participants' "dealing with fears and inhibitions", "reconciling differences in working cultures" and "evolving a training methodology". The last of these helped to introduce an educational activity in gender training. The combining of gender and caste issues with technology in turn brought about transformation with respect to untouchability and repression of women. An important aspect was a change "from being called a wife or mother of so-and-so to being called by their own names", exposing their individual identities. The associated literacy programme further strengthened the position of the women. Although literacy levels were low, the principle of enhancing literacy was accepted, and literacy skills improved rapidly. Literacy also helped to bring about change and mobility on the part of the women.

In conclusion we would like to leave the reader with the following questions for further reflection:

- How does integration pose a threat to the sustainability of innovations?
- Does integration provide a fresh backdrop for new possibilities, or does it denote the demise of creativity?
- How do innovators perceive the twin processes of change and integration in the context of development as a whole?

PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY

Rachel Bélisle, Dipta Bhog and Ingrid Jung

1. Moving beyond the comfort of the participatory approach

Participation — the key word in the world of development — has taken on an almost unquestioned and sacred dimension for practitioners, policy-makers and researchers. The participatory approach in development is seen as central to ensuring that any action for change is meaningful and relevant. It has over the last 15 years been at the crux of turning the notion of development "on its head". The 1980s saw the emergence of criticism of state-directed, centralized development, which had not yielded the fruits of development for the majority. There was an attempt to move towards more people-oriented initiatives for change. Self-help and self-confidence, generated through the active participation of marginalized groups, was seen as a way of empowering communities to bring about radical changes in the existing structures of power. The community rather than institutions were at the heart of initiatives for change. Therefore, concepts such as "participation at every level" — in decision-making, implementation, evaluation, etc. — became the much desired objective of many development programmes and policies. Participation became the key to giving authenticity and validity to developmental initiatives and projects.

Through participatory approaches, communities organized for or against those who oppressed and marginalized them. Implicit within this was the manner in which change was constructed around binary oppositions: the oppressed organized against the oppressor, people's organizations organized against the state, NGOs defined their functioning and identity as opposed to the governmental sector, and experts and professionals were seen as opposed to people's knowledge and abilities.

However, the experience of working to organize groups and communities has brought questions regarding participation to the fore. Often, stating that the work was done in a participatory manner hides the important question of who takes decisions at what level. Somehow, participation becomes a way of neutralizing or making faceless the decisions that are taken within projects and initiatives. It is important to recognize at what level participation takes place, who participates, and what is the role of the intervenor. Participation often slides into becoming a means through which a project can achieve its aims and goals more efficiently and successfully. In the GREAT project, participation is viewed in just that manner, as a way of ensuring that the project does not "fail", that it does not become "irrelevant" and that people do not become cynical — it still believes in the goodwill of the state in planning appropriate interventions for the poor. While this may be true in some cases, it is important to recognize what is central to the issue of participation: whether participation does indeed bring about a change in the structure, approach and strategies that are planned.

At times, participation becomes an end in itself, the process taking over as the objective of the project — this was a problem experienced in many concientization programmes which, while criticizing delivery-oriented programmes, ended up being taken over by participatory processes. In the Mahila Samakhya case we see an integration of the two — the conciousness-

raising approach is integrated and runs side by side with the delivery model. The work on water is done in a context that continuously makes explicit the political and gender implications of the issue. In the Theatre-for-Development experience, there is a temporary attempt to raise the communities' awareness of the problem between the three villages, but this does not translate into a concrete and sustained possibility of change among the villagers.

Yet what cannot be denied within the concept of "innovation" is the importance of those who conceive, dream or break through existing formats to take on new challenges. Leadership, vision and the ability to enthuse are vital elements for those who work within the world of non-formal education. The case studies do not make an overt mention of the role that certain people might have played in providing this input through their action in the projects. Maybe it reflects the dilemma that we face when we wish to emphasise the importance of participatory approaches of *all* the people participating at *all* levels, in *all* the decision-making and innovation that takes place within our projects. Probably, we do not wish to explore the new elements that are emerging in the concepts of leadership, initiative, etc., in their interaction with a participatory process of working. However, in certain projects it can be deduced that there are people who have played an important role in providing the energy and vitality to enthuse those involved in the project. This is possibly true of the fisherfolk project, CAFAED, the couples project (WGTA?), the Theatre-for-Development project (TFD) and the Mahila Samakhya project (MS).

When we look at the issue of participation, the degree to which participants identify with a project and accept it as their own can be an indication of the level of participation achieved. In the couples project, the identification of the participating couples made them take on the role of facilitators, moving on to find an independent organization to take the project further, themselves making it not a CIDE project but truly a couples project.

When we analyse the manner in which the INNAE cases are organized, and the processes by which they function, we see significant shifts in the way that they articulate and express participation. First and foremost, what emerges is that these projects have moved away from the concept of binary realities. What might be considered crucial to much of the movement and innovation that these projects experience is the linkages they make between different worlds and realities.

2. Linking with people's reality

Most of the projects make strong linkages between the aims and objectives of the project, and the lived reality of the people. The necessity of making people articulate and express their needs and demands is not seen as the one and only way of deciding what action should be taken. We see in the WGTA? case study, and in the FEEP and QC case studies, that different groups take the initiative to address a particular problem. People's participation *per se* is not sought at this stage.It is more through the macro experience of an identified problem that the project is formulated, or in the case of some projects, it is the initiators' previous experience of working on other issues which helps them to visualize or conceptualize ways of working on a specific issue. Yet the strength of the initiative lies in the ability really to listen to the response of those the project aims to address. In these projects, we therefore see initial exercises with smaller groups to gauge the response of the group or community — how they perceive the problem, what is of concern to them, etc. As a result, the WGTA? project changes

its name, for example, makes changes in the materials that have been developed and goes on to evolve other modules on the relationship between the couple after the birth of the first child and the relationship between parents and adolescent children.

In the case of CAFAED, we see changes in the way in which they organize their courses. They started with literacy, went on to primary education and moved to secondary courses. CAFAED also moved to playing a facilitative role, helping the learners to make the link between their education and the formal system. The point to note here is that it is not part of CAFAED's agenda to bring people within the fold of the formal system, but it is a response to a need articulated by the learners. The Mahila Samakhya project starts out with the mandate to provide support structures to women, which are seen as a crucial factor in removing the marginalization of women. However, it is through making the necessary linkages between the women's situation and the possibility of working on a specific issue within their reality that the project progresses to water. These projects operate on their ability to shift and adapt and to assess the responses of the different actors involved through more informal methods rather than on formalised needs assessment studies.

The majority of the case studies make linkages of a new order, which break through boundaries between people and institutions, between management and workers, technically trained personnel and village women, labour institutes, adult education and feminist groups, research organizations and people's organizations. Not only do the cases studied make linkages between different kinds of structures and systems, but there are also vital and crucial linkages in the realm of pedagogy, ideas and perspectives, in the creation of new knowledge, and in the processes of training and implementation.

The way in which linkages are made is also of interest. The CAFAED experience points to the linkages that are made between the labour unions and the management to gain access not only to potential learners but also to funds and institutional organizational support. Yet at the same time CAFAED does not limit itself to workers within the companies, it makes linkages with those outside these structures. A lateral or mushrooming linkage is also made with other institutions as the original project proves to be successful. In the WGTA? project, we see this mushrooming linkage with other organizations at a later stage, while in the initial phase the project behaves more like the links in a chain, joining one couple to another. Here, an intensive strategy of networking can be seen, with the trainees becoming the base through whom fresh participants are identified — their neighbours, friends and acquaintances. In the fisherfolk project (FEEP), the networking is done by establishing linkages between those who are planning the training and the materials, and the network that the people's organization has at the village level with the fisherfolk. In the work of the health project (UPMRC), linkages are made within the medical community, between doctors and nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians, and between the medical profession and the community.

3. Pooling ressources for action

The importance of linkages in the case studies reflects a move away from some participatory approaches towards greater emphasis on discussion in planning. The emerging partnerships give people and groups the chance to be part of significant decisions and actions which affect their lives. People and groups involved in a project using a partnership approach differ and do not all have the same power within their community or society. Partners are able

to recognize these differences and inequalities, but they build upon each partner's strength. The partners do not work to achieve a common aim in parallel, but through joint and inter-related action.

Many case studies (India, Palestine, Quebec, etc.) give examples of different organizations or communities working efficiently together on a common project. This interaction and these relationships are not the result of magical thinking. They are made possible by openness, sensitivity and commitment from each partner. In the Quebec case study, for example, the author writes that the three organizations, COFFRE, Relais-femmes and ICEA, which developed the QC tool jointly, had different levels of resources and social credibility. They had to take care to ensure that the particular needs of each of them were met by the project.

Recognition of the work, visible *and* invisible, and of the resources of each partner (human, material and financial) can also be an important ingredient in the success of partnership approaches. It is evident from some case studies that partnership can be an attempt to improve the participatory approaches of the 1980s or a possible innovation based on the need to change our strategies in order to help our educational projects to be more creative and productive.

The word partnership does imply that groups that come together carry with them their own abilities, strengths and constraints, and that institutions, organizations, and individuals have differing resources and power which, when recognized and made visible, can be pooled in order to confront the complex realities of poor and marginalized groups.

3.1. Facing complex realities

The recognition of the fact that we live in worlds that are not black and white but include a lot of grey is central to the concept of partnership. For example, the situation of the fisherfolk in the Philippines is not merely the result of wrong practices or the onslaught of the large trawlers that have affected their catch, but it extends to the upper reaches of the valley where mining brings down silt and degrades the marine environment. Would mere improvement in the techniques of the fisherfolk address their situation? Also, the issue of common rights over resources is not one that only affects the fisherfolk: it has implications for the way in which governments define what are common resources at a time of increasing pressure to privatize and "modernize". Similarly, the situation of women in India is not only affected by their gender but also by their caste and class. Likewise in Palestine, the lack of health services is not merely the result of inefficient health services existing in the area but also a consequence of the larger political and economic situation within which the Palestinians find themselves. Poverty and lack of resources form part of the dilemma of how to cope with ill health and lack of facilities.

The concept of partnership makes overt the political realities within which projects are conceived and nurtured. Education is not a neutral act, and therefore a closer look at the nature of alliances that are made between groups, institutions and ideas reflects the political climate within which adult educators negotiate and facilitate learning. In the couples project (WGTA?), GREAT and CAFAED we see a focus on the need to harmonize and to integrate. Given the high degree of political instability, civil strife and conflict within these countries, the desire for harmony becomes a subversive act in itself. Some projects such as the Mahila Samakhya (MS) project take on issues and question well-established institutions against a backdrop of a

relatively secure political and civil environment. There cannot therefore be a barometer indicating what is the ideal, politically correct approach to education. A reflective and self-critical approach would perhaps be the way of balancing what is ideal and what is possible within a given context.

Partnerships take different forms in the INNAE case studies — between institutions and organizations, between institutions and communities or specific groups, between different systems of knowledge and between different approaches to development. The common purpose of partnership is not the relationship itself but the finding of a solution to a complex, major or persistent problem. While some of the linkages that have been made in the INNAE projects have been pointed out above, it would be interesting to explore how inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural approaches have led to the creation of knowledge within the context of non-formal adult education.

3.2. Linking rather than ranking

In the QC project three agencies come together: COFFRE (a vocational training group), ICÉA (an adult education organization) and Relais-femmes (a feminist organization) on the issue of how to facilitate women's entry into the labour force, especially for those who have no secondary diploma. Here we see three different spheres of "knowledge" and "experience" coming together to produce a training kit which will be used by trainers and organizations from different academic backgrounds and with different experience. In order to develop materials, it was thought crucial that the "toolmakers" should form links with trainers and with some of the women who would be participants in the QC training. The case study mentions how important it is for the trainers and participants to "recognize" themselves in the materials. The educational approach focuses on the generic skills of the learners more than on the content that is to be transferred, and it is easier to find space during QC workshops for the expression of differences. The approach used generic skills as a link within each woman's life and within the group.

In the WGTA? project too, the materials were seen as the *medium* rather than the *end* in itself of knowledge creation. The couples could use them but could add their own experiences to enhance and improve the analysis or to criticize the existing situation between couples. The materials were not all-powerful in defining the content of what was worth knowing, but attempted to be close to people's experience and provided the space for the participants to add their body of knowledge. Therefore, the materials were able to some extent to organize the interaction between the learners themselves and between facilitators and learners. In the health project, the medical experts attempted to formulate curricula that made "expert" knowledge accessible and open to change based on the needs and abilities of the learners.

This interdisciplinary approach to the creation of knowledge adds another dimension to adult education — it extends the imagined world of adult education beyond literacy and the acquisition of specific competencies related to reading, writing and comprehension. It brings within its fold those who are outside this context, who come from the knowledge bases of the environment, andragogy, medicine, feminist analysis and university education, so as to bring their knowledge into interaction with different groups.

This interdisciplinary approach has implications for those who seek to innovate or facilitate interventions in education. What is evident is that those who are in the role of

intervenors transcend boundaries, criss-cross from being researchers to trainers, form a joint lobby with different institutions, and create materials and curricula that are geared (in some cases) to non-literate groups. Speaking in different registers simultaneously as they interact at various levels within the project, and bringing them together to cohere with the expectations of the myriad actors, are some of the special abilities of those who seek interdisciplinary partnerships. Other characteristics of people active in these partnerships are a disposition to interact, and the ability to communicate, to listen and to recognize in other people's experience both new ideas and different knowledge and competences which shed light on previously invisible work and experience.

In these situations, the dichotomy of the outsider-insider breaks down, and what becomes explicit is the ability of the facilitator, implementor, planner and toolmaker to experience the *other*. The other here represents a different reality and perception, which may not necessarily be that of the intervenor. This can be seen clearly in the case of the Philippine project, in which the researchers take on the roles of training fisherfolk, translating their experience into the materials that are produced and at the same time networking with like-minded institutions. In the QC project, the feminist critique of non-recognition of women's work and abilities turns into the "generic skills" issue and is translated into training materials to facilitate women's entry into the labour force. This interdisciplinary approach is probably not possible without "risk-taking" on the part of those who initiate such partnerships. In the health workers' project, doctors, who are professional experts, are willing to take the chance of training village-level workers to handle health problems directly. In the Mahila Samakhya case, forming a partnership with the waterworks corporation is not without the risk of the initiative being rejected on the grounds that non-literate women cannot learn the technical skill of repairing hand pumps. The interdisciplinary nature of the project also meant that the intervenors themselves had to learn the technique of hand-pump repair.

3.3. Partnership is not a magical tool

However, partnerships are not a magical tool that can solve all problems. There is certainly a danger of creating a myth of partnership, especially when it is differentiated from the participatory approach.These two approaches are not in opposition or in contradiction. They are different. We probably have to be careful not to make the approach a criterion of all projects in non-formal education, even if we have discovered that many innovative projects work with partnership values.

Because the partnership approach demands a lot of energy to nourish relations, break down stereotypes and build up trust between individuals, organizations and groups, it should be used in complex situations.The conflict between separate approaches, different work cultures, and specific foci, is real and is experienced by those involved. Human factors are crucial in making interactions between the formal, the non-formal, and the in-sector possible.

Partnerships are based on inter*action* (people want to, and do take action in their respective fields). Participation is still an important process in improving relations between partners, but participation without real interaction (asking advice, consulting, discussing and debating before final decisions are taken) can be a source of frustration, mistrust and break-up. Partnership is not a matter of mutual convenience between the actors ("you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours"). Actors share common values, for example in the QC project the common desire to reconcile traditional and modern forms of knowledge.

In the distance education project (AETTC) we see the different departments within the Ministry of Education working on the project, where they share responsibilities, yet there is a problem with the concept of partnership here which emerges, with the personnel department not giving accreditation to the curriculum, resulting in a two-year delay in the project. Therefore, there can be situations in which different agencies have defined responsibilities, but are not in concert with each other — which would mean that this is not a partnership. What this experience perhaps points to is the need to form partnerships with different kinds of organizations, such as research and NGO field-based organizations, training groups and material production groups, rather than that of having research groups link up with other research bodies, government departments link up with other government agencies, and so on, which might lead to a replicating of abilities or like-minded complacency. The case studies also point to three-way partnerships being a healthy way of interacting, the presence of a third party averting the danger of two-party conflict.

4. The broader dimension of sustainability and transferability

Sustainability and transferability in educational projects which follow the partnership paradigm can be seen from different angles: structures, ideas, knowledge and competences developed within the projects, personal contacts established with people having influence in different sectors, and improvement of individual commitment to a cause or a community. Sustainability of the structures is normally the first aspect that people look at. In the context of the nine case studies, we have to admit that this would be too limiting, and that a combination of elements is necessary to make innovative programmes or innovative approaches sustainable.

4.1. Sustainability of structures

Some projects, such as CAFAED, health (UPMRC) or distance education (AETTC), are supported by strong structures. Those structures are made possible by the conjunction of legal, organizational, strategic and socio-political influences. For example, the Continuing Adult Education Programme is sustained by an institution, CAFAM, established in 1957 when the Colombian Government instituted a form of social benefit whereby all companies or employers had to affiliate their employees to a family subsidy fund. CAFAM is also involved in many other activities and it appears that as long as the Continuing Adult Education Programme responds to the articulated needs of the participants, it will probably continue to run. The health workers' project is supported by a professional organization, and the distance education project by the Ministry of Education. The continuation of these projects is guaranteed through the sustained support of these organizations. There is now a common view that projects must over a period of time become self-sustaining and economically independent. However, this expectation is unrealistic in many cases, and relevant projects might easily collapse if the funding covered only the "innovation phase" with no support for a period of consolidation. If a project is to continue, consideration has to be given to the question of funding by the donor who, if not integrated into the project as a partner, may imperil its long-term viability.

It is obvious in all case studies that the sustainability of structures is not the only explanation for the success of attempts to be innovative. Projects or approaches which are not supported by strong structures, wealthy institutions or sufficient financial support have to look for other types of contribution in order to sustain themselves.

4.2. Sustainability of ideas

Ideas such as working with distance education for the training of literacy teachers, giving university students a chance to work in villages, giving women an opportunity to be hand-pump mechanics, and using theatre to solve community problems, can all be taken from innovative projects and integrated into our own practice in order to improve sustainability.

4.3. Sustainability of knowledge

The transferability and sustainability of the knowledge built up within an innovative project, which is more often articulated than an idea (e.g., how to be efficent in the training of hand-pump mechanics), can be seen from the point of view of:

- the learners, who can use what they have learnt in their daily lives
- the educators and facilitators, who can use that knowledge in other programmes or projects, or
- the organization, which can address new issues with new eyes and new perspectives.

Within a partnership approach, the dissemination of knowledge is increased because many actors can influence each of their organizations by changing their way of perceiving aspects of reality. Materials can facilitate the sustainability of new knowledge, as we saw in many of our nine projects. But there is a need to differentiate between publication and the aim of transmitting information. In the QC and the couples projects, the materials do not attempt to be didactic, to give formal instructions on how to proceed or to provide all the answers to a specific issue. The dissemination of knowledge is in these cases unlike many publications, which set out to transmit knowledge or information. Materials are a live element in a live context. The materials cannot take the place of the persons who will use them. They help to improve facilitators' competencies and assist them to make linkages between their own knowledge, goals, experiences, and their environments.

This appears to be a characteristic of QC and the WGTA? project. These projects are concerned with the knowledge of the people and give a lot of space to discovering their existing skills and knowledge and to mobilizing them to act in new and everyday situations. In these cases the materials give a basic security to the facilitators, who can explore informal territories of knowledge with basic tools. This security is important for the sustainability of their approaches.

But innovative materials can be elaborated in a completely different way. In cases such as the Colombian and Kenyan projects, materials are used directly by *learners* and give more structured guides to the users. In these projects, the main goal is not to discover informal territories of knowledge and to mobilize but to transmit knowledge and to develop new abilities, identify limitations and give the opportunity to prepare people to pass examinations at their own pace. The diplomas they obtain will help them to gain access to new fields and

to cross major social and professional barriers. Good results in examinations contribute greatly to the sustainability of the programmes.

4.4. Sustainability of competencies

Building up the confidence of all the actors in the nine projects can be seen as an important outcome of the programmes and as a means of sustaining and transferring the innovative approach.

Individuals (and sometimes organizations) in a community can learn in such a way that they are able to respond to crucial needs in their own community. This is the case, for example, with the hand-pump mechanics in India and the health workers in Palestine. Those women are learning by doing in their own community, where they will have to continue to put their new competencies into practice. They develop knowledge and skills in an active and working context.

The students of GREAT also develop competencies in their work with the community. These competencies can be transferred, consciously or not, to their daily life and their new workplaces. We mentioned earlier the mushrooming of structures; we could talk also about the "mushrooming of competencies".

Not many case study authors mention directly the development of human resources, a sort of vocational training. It is, however, possible to deduce that the competencies needed to cope with the particular difficulties of each project were improved through action. These "improved" competencies are certainly useful in many other situations that the actors have to face.

5. Do we always have to be innovative?

Related to the question of the sustainability of an innovative project is the question of the role innovation itself plays in the project. Can a project which was innovative at the moment of its implementation stay innovative after years of operation? Is it necessary always to be innovative? We find in the case studies that the programmes and approaches that are both sustainable and obviously innovative, such as Mahila Samakhya, are those which are very close to people and are ready to change and adapt their activities, materials, structures and strategies whenever these are needed. What is important is the ability of a project to grow and adapt continuously and flexibly in response to the changes brought about by its implementation. But we notice also that regular pauses for reflection are important for innovators so that they can listen to new realities, understand with more acuity the reality which is evolving, and consolidate their own actions and their joint activities with others.

5.1. Can we transfer innovative projects?

But can those projects, programmes and approaches be transferred to other contexts? In GREAT, WGTA? and QC the approach and some of the knowledge are certainly transferable, but only with considerable flexibility which takes into account the reality of the people who want to adopt them.

Could, for example, Colombian fisherfolk adopt the Philippine programme? Or could Quebec vocational training groups adopt the methodology of Nirantar (MS, India)? Is it possible to transfer a project that is *tailored* to a specific context, by and with the people experiencing it, to other contexts and realities? Can the lessons learnt by one person or organization from their own experiences be of any practical use to other people or organizations?

In a few case studies (Kenya, Cameroon and Quebec), authors do talk about ideas coming from other projects. The author of the Kenyan case study talks about *adoption* and *tailoring* at the same time. In Cameroon, the author talks about *re-inventing* and *adapting* to the environment. In Quebec, the author talks about *inspiration* and a *second generation* of tools (NCF).

From our discussions in the INNAE project we have to admit that innovations introduced by others cannot be applied without adaptation and that innovative approaches have to be adjusted in context if they are to stay innovative, productive and creative. This is clear, for example to COFFRE and its partners when they recognize that groups similar to COFFRE will have to adjust the QC approach to make it work for their own groups. Meanwhile, in other projects, we find new ideas, new approaches and new attitudes that could be an inspiration. There is no point in reinventing the wheel.

5.2. *Letting go of the recipe paradigm*

Non-formal projects are part of the history of social development, and hence are part of the actual processes and discourse of social and political change and development. Over the last twenty years, two opposing views of social practices and political action have converged in some way because of the crises of Marxism and developmentalism and the inability of capitalism to overcome poverty and inequity. The sterile practice of NGOs and people's organizations in adopting a confrontational attitude towards the state, and the ineffectiveness of bureaucratic solutions have obliged many of those actually in the field to look for solutions to the problems of the poor and the marginalized. This shift is evident in most of the projects described in the case studies. The need to adapt to reality in order to help to meet the immediate and long-term needs of individuals and the collective, has brought about a new open-minded view on possible allies and a shift from participation or conscientization towards partnership and resource-sharing. Concepts such as sustainability make sense within this new paradigm, which relies much more on innovation and on the innovative capacities of the actors than the recipe paradigm which used to prevail — and for some people still does.

THE NEEDS ISSUE

Maria Consuegra, Khalfan Mazrui and Josef Müller

Innovative non-formal adult education programmes are needs-based. In the case studies, it is evident that needs were not derived logically from the subject matter or the state of the art; they were assessed. To meet the needs of all the actors involved, they were assessed with the cooperation of the learners in a programme and other stakeholders in the community.

A need, generally speaking, is a discrepancy between what is and what should be.

Innovative adult education programmes are meant to bridge the gap between what is and what should be. The case studies have shown that innovations are creative, flexible and satisfying answers to real needs. The needs issue, therefore, is transversal in all the case studies prepared in this project on innovations in adult education.

1. Initiating an innovation

The innovations analyzed originated in obvious social and community problems such as poverty, deterioration of the environment, lack of education, lack of water, and poor health status. These problems were so obvious that they became key areas of work without sophisticated baseline surveys, needs assessments or analyses.

Those who set out to deal with these problems were adult educators, social workers, development planners, university teachers, etc. They had experience in how to deal with socio-economic problems through education and clear concepts such as education for development (CAFAED) or empowerment (MS, India). These concepts became the intellecual basis for the innovative action which addressed the obvious problem. The case studies clearly show that the initiative to deal with these problems did not come from the potential learners themselves but from professionals who were aware of and sensitive to the problems of *communities* (MS, FEEP, GREAT, Theatre-for-Development, Community Health Project) and *learners* (CAFAED, WGTA?, AETTC, QC).

2. Building up a support structure

The key problems which the innovations addressed were not only educational (CAFAED) but also economic (QC), environmental (FEEP), social (WGTA?), etc. To deal with the complexity of these problems it was necessary to build up support structures, for example in the form of a women's organization to remove the marginalization of women (MS) or in the form of linkages with the different sectors within the community (UPMRC, Palestine) or by networking with different organizations to bring about synergy: this was the case in the FEEP project, in which the organizer of the programme, Tambuyog Development Center, cooperated

closely with NGOs and fisherfolk organizations. In some cases the innovation needed initial assistance from donors to take off (FEEP, GREAT).

3. Assessing learning needs

In any process of needs assessment, direct or indirect, the basic question is:

Who needs what, as defined by whom?

The first question in a needs assessment is the question *who* precisely the target group is, or who the participants in a programme are. Innovative non-formal basic education programmes are usually intensive and selective. To be intensive they focus on a specific carefully selected group such as illiterate women in a number of communities, or a certain area, as was the case in the Indian project. The training projects among the case studies had two different target groups: the *trainees* (future trainers), who needed training, and the *communities* in which these trainers would work. Selection of the target group depended to a great extent on the intentions and resources of the programme planners and implementers.

The second question, *what*, is equally important but difficult to answer. The answer depends to a great extent on the final question of *by whom* the needs are defined. Is it the future learners themselves, is it a specific group of stakeholders in the communities? Who represents whom in this process? Is there a pressure group trying to perpetuate its vested interests? Is it government policy or the donors who set their priorities?

The case studies have presented adult education as a transactional encounter to meet the real needs of the learners. That means that sole responsibility for determining needs or developing currricula does not rest *either* with the educator *or* with the learners. If the first obtains, then we have an authoritarian style and a one-way transmission of knowledge and skills. If needs assessment, curricula and methods are predetermined solely by what learners say they want, then the "cafeteria approach" governs the educational process. Accepting the felt needs rationale without any further inquiry and needs negotiation means that planners and facilitators have abandoned responsibility for the learning process and achievement of learning aims and objectives. Succesful learning means keeping the balance between the learning process and the learning outcome, so that results justify the efforts.

3.1 Nationwide adult education programmes

Nationwide programmes are usually centrally developed. In exceptional cases, the curriculum is based solely on baseline surveys or needs assessments. Aims and objectives are centrally defined, often influenced by political priorities and guidelines. Curricula are usually developed from the state of the art and generally accepted methods of adult education by panels of experts and subject-matter specialists. National programmes are mass programmes. This is their strength and weakness. They can reach large populations but cannot meet the specific needs of particular groups. They therefore usually leave room for local adaptations and inbuilt feedback so that necessary corrective measures can be taken at all levels as they go on. This was the case in the Kenya Adult Education Teachers' Programme. In view of the earlier positive experiences in Kenya with the distance courses for primary school teachers and the Foundations Course in Adult Education of the then College of Adult and Distance Education (and given the time

constraints), it did not seem necessary to test the objectives, content and methods of the course in a pilot programme.

3.2. Small-scale selective and intensive programmes

Small-scale programmes such as the innovations studied, with the exception of the Kenyan case, do meet the needs of future learners through direct interaction with learners and all stakeholders. One could assume that the learners are those who can define their needs best. However, needs, like problems, interests and motivations are of a mixed character. Needs, especially those voiced first and foremost, are often no more than wants or interests. There are instances where learners cannot identify their real needs. CAFAED, for example, encourages and assists learners when they come to express themselves and identify their needs. This assistance is given with great care and it is always an encounter based on information and mutual trust.

In community-oriented cases, the process of needs assessment involves not only educators and learners but all stakeholders. An example of cooperation among all stakeholders in the process of needs assessment is given in the Graduate Resource Advancement Project (GREAT) from Sri Lanka.

As a first step, the planners visited all communities selected to discuss the project plans with the local coordinators and to prepare the different parties involved.

Assessment of the sprecific needs of the people was then done:

- by the graduate catalysts (GCs) living with the people
- by the GCs listening to the people. *"Remember that people know more about their needs!"*
- through rapid appraisal techniques
- through meetings/discussions with the people to "negotiate" needs
- by developing the people's confidence, and
- by developing solutions and resolving conflicts by living with and listening to the people.

No offer of ready-made solutions was made.

In the dialectical process of "needs negotiation" the needs as felt by the people and the needs as seen by the graduate catalysts and other programme planners were brought together to reach a consensus on the "real needs", which then become the specific objectives of an innovative programme. These real needs are those that reflect the life experiences of the learners. If an adult gets the impression that her/his experience is not being valued (s)he feels rejected as a person and may not feel motivated to join the programme or may drop out early.

Needs negotiation implies a strategic choice of needs to be met first, before consideration is given to others which stand a chance of being fulfilled later. Needs have a time frame. For example, literacy is of great importance in any basic education programme, but it is not necessarily the first step. When the strategic "entry needs" are not covered, literacy can wait for some time, as was the case in the Indian Mahila Samakhya Programme on women's education for empowerment.

Experience shows that learners are often not able to meet their basic needs before needs at a higher level, such as self-awareness and self-esteem, have been met. These needs may in turn become survival needs in the same way as food and housing or, in the words of Maria Consuegra (CAFAED), "If adult education is to play a fundamental role in socio-economic development,

it should aim at the satisfaction of high-order needs...well beyond the fulfilment of survival needs." Needs which are satisfied create new needs, as was the case in *Question de compétences*.

According to the state of the art, programme planners should in principle draw up a needs profile on the basis of the needs assessed. A needs profile brings the various needs of the future learners into a logical sequence and a priority order. However, the case studies show that needs profiles were not elaborated before the programmes began. Needs were met as a result of strategic choices made as programmes went on. Rachel Bélisle (QC) rightly stressed in discussion that "drawing up needs profiles is an option which is not always realistic or a priority in the non-formal sector. Sometimes those profiles are needed by the donors more than by the people actually involved in the programme".

The cases studied show that to make "people" aware of their "real" needs is already the beginning of the educational process. Learners become active partners in this process. They become the "researchers of their own realities". Without such active participation by learners from the very beginning, they may not claim ownership of a programme, and the programme may not be sustainable.

Needs assessment is also part of the conscientization process, which plays a major role in the innovations analyzed. In the case of the couples project (WGTA?) in Chile, and Theatre-for-Development, participatory needs assessment was the core and crux of the whole approach. Hansel Ndumbe-Eyoh has called attention to the words of Ross Kidd that: "The role of drama is not to provide a finished prepacked world view but to engage the audience in the production of meaning, in finishing or resolving the drama of their lives."

Yet, however important conscientization might be, the theatre case shows clearly that without appropriate follow-up action, conscientization can easily lead to frustration among the learners. Conscientization must go hand in hand with the development of competencies, i.e. the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to cope with real-life situations, and with the securing of the necessary inputs for change, as was the case in the Indian Mahila Samakhya Programme and the Philippine FEEP Project, in which TDC (Tambuyog Development Center) went from advocacy and awareness building to intensive skills training for grassroot coastal managers.

4. Validating learning needs

Nearly all programmes introduced pilot phases to validate the needs, especially the learning needs assessed, and to test the objectives defined, the content specified, and the materials developed. CAFAED even introduced an additional exploratory phase which preceded the usual pilot phase. The purpose of this exploratory phase was not yet to test a draft curriculum but to validate the learning needs and to determine the starting point of the learning process. The exploratory phase was necessary to find out what competencies the learners already had and what they still needed to perform in real-life situations such as the family, the community and the workplace. The exploratory phase was also necessary to make adult learners aware of the advantages of a new learning style involving self-learning and interlearning in small groups. A draft curriculum was then developed on the basis of the results of this exploratory phase. This curriculum was tested in the conventional pilot phase (in the case of CAFAED a second preparatory phase) and the learning needs assessed during the exploratory stage were thereby further validated.

5. Implementating and monitoring programmes

The cases show that needs assessment is not done once and for all. It is a continuing process as part of monitoring and an ongoing reflection on "what happens" within and outside the programmes, and on what happens to the different actors in the programme, who are engaged in a process of sharing, in the course of which both sides take each other seriously. Both sides learn and both sides inevitably move their positions and modify their roles. This can be done formally, in "self-reflection meetings" as in the Indian Project, and informally as part of this "continuous reflection on action" which is essential for all good "praxis". Intervention is then an intrinsic part of the lessons learnt. Reflection on action secures adaptation to changing and upcoming needs as needs covered create new needs. The sustainability and expansion of an innovation lies in its ability to continuously respond to the changing needs of communities and learners.

6. Educational approaches and methods used in need-based innovations

In meeting the learners' needs, the educational approach is as important as the results of an implicit or explicit needs assessment. In fact, choosing the right educational approach is part of the needs orientation of an innovation. The innovations analysed were not based on sophisticated needs assessments but dealt with apparent problems on the basis of relevant concepts such as pedagogy for development (CAFAED) or guided didactic conversation (AETTC, Kenya). They used participatory approaches and methods based on the principles of adult learning such as active learning, experiential learning, choice of real-life situations as the basis for learning (WGTA?), and building upon learners' experience and expertise, which includes going back to traditional indigenous knowledge and practices, as was the case in the Philippine FEEP. Adult educators are aware that "people are the engine of change when their potential is developed and when the conditions for participation are created" (Maria A. Consuegra).

All education aims at emancipation and empowerment through a process of conscientization and the development of competencies to influence reality. Education refuses to transmit a finished product. It guides the learner to discover and "name" the world around and to influence it. As the learner matures, (s)he assumes the role of a knowing subject in dialogue with the educator. Adult education is based on this dialogue, which creates the climate conducive to learning. The learning needs of adults are not only met by choosing the right content but also by selecting a learning process which reflects appopriate adult education methods and the learning style of adults.

The case studies show the following characteristics of adult learning:

- Adult learning is learner-centred, i.e., adults learn what is of interest to them and what has become meaningful to them.

- The self-concept of adults influences the learning process and *vice versa*. A learning process raising self-esteem makes their lives meaningful in relation to the world around

them, gives them a future-oriented vision of life and motivates them to take advantage of new educational opportunities and challenges.

- Adults need to see results within a reasonable time frame. The experience of CAFAED clearly demonstrates that contrary to the opinion of some experts, adult learners have a need for certificates as indicators of accomplishment and credentials to get into paid employment or further education.

- Adult learning is experiential learning. Solutions come from adults' own understanding and are congruent with their life experiences.

- Adult learning is active learning with the focus on applying the knowledge and skills acquired.

- Adult learning is a social process. Adults learn best in groups, which gives them the opportunity to participate actively in an interlearning process by exchanging ideas, by expressing themselves, and by learning from each other.

The analysis of the case studies clearly shows that the supreme criterion of education is "praxis". The origin and purpose of educational theory is educational action. A true theory is reflection on previous action with the intention of returning to practice. Through practice, theory is then refuted or confirmed, developed and enriched. The innovations analyzed were based on continuous reflection on action and action upon reflection. Needs identification became part of this process.

CONVERSATION ON EMPOWERMENT

Rosa Saavedra, Miryan Zúñiga, Maria Linnea (Ging) Tanchuling, Uta Papen

This text was developed on the basis of several conversations between a group of INNAE participants (all women) during the INNAE synthesis seminar in October 1995. The text was jointly produced by the speakers, from the notes taken during the discussion.

1. The nature of empowerment

Miryan: The first thing we have to explain here is why we are discussing empowerment in the INNAE project. I think it is because more or less all the experiences included in INNAE claim that they are empowering the people who participate in their project, be it the women in the projects in Canada, India and Palestine, the couples in Chile, the communities in Sri Lanka and Cameroon, the fisherfolk in the Philippines or the adult learners in Colombia.

Empowerment: Definition

Uta: I would say that the INNAE projects, although they do not all use the term, adopt goals which can be labelled as empowerment.

Rosa: But the projects mean different things when they speak about empowerment, or whatever term they use. So, what is the meaning of empowerment in each of these projects? And, how do we here define the concept?

M: Empowerment goes along with conscientization, and transforming gender relations. We can find the roots of this concept in the work of Freire and in the feminist movement. In the present context, empowerment has become a very trendy word which is used by many organizations who have overextended and appropriated its meaning. The term is used in many contexts, where it means all kinds of things, but has lost its original emancipatory meaning. Empowerment has become a very powerful political label which is deliberately employed in order to give a desired progressive or feminist outlook to activities which are in fact promoting quite different perspectives.

Empowerment: a trendy word

Ging: This is often called the endemic use of the word empowerment!

U: Empowerment deals with unequal power structures implicit in the relations between members of different sexes, races, classes and ethnic groups, be it at personal or at institutional level. It does not only relate to gender questions. Empowerment means changing the existing power distribution in interpersonal and institutional relations. Specifically, it means making

the powerless more powerful. In that sense, it can signifiy both the process and the outcomes of the process.

R: I like the definition stated in a paper by one of our colleagues which says that empowerment means that people become aware of their problems, gain knowledge, competencies, take action, gain control and power over resources.

U: To me, this definition is to weak. All these things can belong to a process whereby people become empowered. But it is not true that people who gain knowledge or people who improve their economic situation necessarily become empowered. The problem with such a definition is that its five components have to be related to each other. One has, for example, to ask what kind of knowledge people need, if they are to gain more power? It is not any kind of knowledge, but knowledge which can be useful in the specific context of their problems. Only such knowledge can help them to act on their problems. In the **Mahila Samakhya**, it is knowledge about water-pumps and mechanic skills, for example.

Shades of Empowerment

M: If empowerment is a process, then there can be no such thing as total empowerment. There are different shades of empowerment. We have to look at empowerment in terms of specific goals and capacities. By specific I mean goals relative to the context of the person or the group concerned. For each of the projects which we will discuss, we will have to identify these goals. We would also have to look at the conditions which have made the projects more or less successful in achieving these goals.

G: Empowerment includes the process of deconstructing what seems to be normal and natural. The awareness-buildung process - the conscientization - requires this deconstruction. A crucial aspect of power is that it allows those who are in power to define what is natural and cannot be contested. In that way, religion, culture and science are strong oppressive tools. How cultural theories legitimize and limit women's tasks in the household or their position in the family can be seen in the Palestine study. At the same time, the empowerment process must not stop at the deconstruction phase, it also requires a process of creating a new reality or a new vision. For women this involves acquiring new tasks and new roles in society, for example becoming community health workers.

Deconstructing and reconstructing reality

U: This construction of an alternative reality is crucial to the process of empowerment. When you start imagining new visions and experimenting with new ideas, it gives you a goal or a dream. It is this vision of a changed future that gives you the courage and the motivation to act. But in order to be able to make the dream come true, we have to look for resources, we need knowledge, technologies and perhaps most of all we need self-confidence. In order to make the process continual, and the vision our driving force, we need to be convinced that we can

Empowerment: the vision of a changed future

succeed in our efforts at change. The INNAE cases give some interesting examples of how an educational project can help learners to build up this confidence.

M: Let me summarize what we have said about our understanding of empowerment. We can say that empowerment aims at a change in the uneven power relationship, enabling the powerless to develop the skills, competencies, and organization needed in order to tilt the existing social, political and economic structure. However, I want to stress that this change can only be achieved through a collective process, when I am with others.

R: No, I do not agree with you. I look at empowerment as a process too, but there are different stages of empowerment, from the individual to the collective. The first step is individual empowerment, then comes empowerment at the group level.

What comes first: individual or collective empowerment?

M: I don't share this idea of a sequence. Individual empowerment is not a prerequisite for collective empowerment. Nor is it a necessary condition for a form of empowerment which includes challenging the power structures at the level of society. The individual can also come to an empowered condition as a member of a group which is committed to a process of change.

R: If the individual does not reach a state of critical awareness, he or she cannot promote change. Without that awareness, even when belonging to a group which is in a process of change, he or she will be the person in that group who will resist the proposed changes and who will opt for leaving things as they are. Empowerment includes a change in each person's life and way of thinking which the individual has to feel internally.

M: But the awareness of the individual can develop during the group process, through discussion with others.

U: You seem to be thinking of a rather high level of empowerment. But there are different levels of empowerment. What you are referring to is empowerment which includes all spheres of a person's life.

M: Exactly. You cannot separate out being empowered only in your private life or in parts of your public life. As you become empowered in one context, you can use the abilities which you have gained in order to make changes in other contexts.

U: Of course, this is the aim. But is it not a very high level of empowerment you are speaking of? It is the ideal of persons being very advanced in their empowerment. But not everything can be achieved at once. We have to look at the possibilities of education. What can it do to help people become more empowered, and where do the educators have to link up with others, where does education have to make links with other strategies of social change? I am thinking for example of the Philippine project, where rights over fishing grounds are a key issue.

Potentials and limitations of education for empowerment

G: I also look at it this way. There are different areas in which empowerment can take place. If you feel empowered in one setting only, your empowerment may be incomplete, but still it is empowerment. But empowerment does not come all at once, not as a big package. It can take place in several parts of your life, in the family, at your workplace or in the community. It can include action to meet practical needs or to meet long-term or strategic needs. However, the latter require mobilization and organization.

U: Empowerment has been defined as including changes at the psychological, cognitive, political and economic levels. As far as the two first dimensions are concerned, they are basically linked to the personal level. The economic dimension is both related to personal and collective levels of empowerment. Political empowerment most clearly has to do with strategic needs, and collective action is seen as a necessary condition for political and social empowerment.

G: So what, then, does power mean in the context of empowerment?

Em-power-ment: what is power?

R: Power is being in a position to have access to and control over material, human and intellectual resources and the benefits derived from them. Having power means a certain degree of access to and control over such ressources. Distribution of power between individuals and groups also relates to how many different kinds of resources one can access.

M: Power is relational and is exercised in the social, political and economic relationships between individuals and groups. And empowerment means altering the existing divisions of power.

U: Let me just add one more thing. To be in power not only means to be in a position to make one's own decisions but also to be able to impose those on others.

2. Empowerment in the INNAE projects

R: I feel we should now come to the INNAE cases. Can we start with the following two questions: *Who are the people that are empowered in the INNAE projects and how are they empowered?* I will start with the Kenyan **Adult Education Teacher Training Course.** The project emphasises literacy as a pre-requisite for social change. The Kenyans are dealing with what is seen as a national problem, half of the population being illiterate. Thus, the project responds to this specific situation, or to the felt need which requires people to be able to read and write.

Empowerment: For whom? How?

G: As I see it, the Kenyan project assumes that literacy is needed in order to help people to increase their economic skills and to promote the country's economic development. But, can we then speak of empowerment in the sense in which we defined it? It is part of a process of empowerment, but it does not include all the elements of empowerment which we have listed in our above definition. Hence, I would say that empowerment here takes place at the personal level, but it does not aim at structural and social changes.

M: At the individual level, the project intends to help people to participate in a modern state, because they need to know how to read and write in order to vote.

Empowerment through literacy training?

U: The project also aims at making literacy teachers more efficient in their job. It intends to enable the teachers to acquire new competencies and, more importantly perhaps, to gain a professional status through certification. This could also be regarded as a form of empowerment, although more precisely it means raising the status of one group within the existing power system, thus helping them to move a step upwards in the power structure. What I don't see here is a clear link to transforming social structures. The focus is on enabling people to perform better within the given system.

G: That also applies to **CAFAED.** As an educational project, similar to the Kenyan programme, it empowers the individual to be more capable within the system, to be a good citizen, a good husband or wife, a skilled worker. The change promoted is at the personal level. People are helped to gain more for themselves within the present relationships of power. There is no systematic questioning of the existing division of power, neither in couples and families, nor in the workplace and the community.

Empowerment at the personal level

M: I suggest that we make the following distinction. From a social or political perspective, CAFAED is adaptive. But from an individual perspective it is transformative, because its aim is to improve the individual's capacity to participate more fully in the system. More importantly, it promotes people's capacity for creative, self-determined learning and equips them with skills and knowledge. People learn how to make more autonomous decisions in all aspects of their lives. That may include questions such as whether they want to form or to join organizations that set out to promote social change.

Developing autonomous learning capacities

U: The flexible, learner-centered educational methodology, which is the innovative feature of the project, is the basis for CAFAED's success in this development of autonomous learning capacities. At the same time, the project recognizes the fact that gaining a certificate does empower people in their society. For those who have not been in school and have no school qualifications, it is very important to be given that chance to acquire a certificate which is recognized as equivalent to formal qualifications. It helps them to have access to other fields of activity in the society, other jobs, etc.

G: One thing I would like to mention about CAFAED is that it works with people who at least have their basic needs met and not with people at an extreme level of poverty, such as the homeless. That makes the project different from some of the other INNAE cases.

M: **Theatre-for-Development** claims to be a strategy which helps to empower the poor and the voiceless through a process of awareness-raising and collective discussion which

includes data collection, analysis of the social situation, rehearsals, performance and public debate. This process can facilitate the emergence of leadership and community organization, it can also generate social action for change. As I see it, this is the theory of TFD. TFD claims to aim at meeting strategic needs. But from the examples given in the case study we can see that in fact it is practical needs that are tackled.

G: A seemingly neutral venue like the theatre is used to bring out conflictual issues and this is quite important in a social and political situation where people are not used to or cannot express themselves openly.

U: Theatre is fiction, it allows things to be expressed which cannot normally be said openly. As it is traditionally a collective activity, almost the entire village can participate. But the theatre workshops described in the case study reveal clearly some of the limitations we face if we attempt or initiate an empowering learning process. The danger is wanting too much in too short a time. The educator who is convinced of her method and sure of her aims, might too easily believe that she knows what the crucial issues for the people are. How can such a limited experience, although certainly catalytic and revealing, lead to long-term processes of change? The focus in TFD is on "attitudinal training", but resources are also needed, in the form of skills, knowledge and finances. How can the workshop alone lead to sustained community action? We are speaking here of a highly repressive political environment which makes all popular movement extremely difficult.

Local culture as a means for collective reflection

G: In the **Mahila Samakhya**, project it is the women who are empowered. The project uses as a starting point the issue of water, which is a practical need. It banks on the traditional role of women, because they are responsible for fetching water. But water is not a neutral issue, it has to do with culture and it is highly political. The project works on the practical need of clean water for communities, and in particular for women. But at the same time the training of mechanics tackles the strategic issues of women's subordinated position in the family and the community. The two issues cannot be separated, women working as mechanics necessarily lead to conflict in the family and community over female roles. So, the traditional sexual division of labour was an issue.

Combining skills training with conscientization

R: The training activities not only focused on technical skills, but were at the same time a forum for women, where they collectively discussed male and female relations and issues of women's subordination in their society. The project also provided space for discussing the change process participants were going through, and for reflecting on their experiences.

M: Change is always a frightening event. It encounters resistance from those in the process, and from outsiders. In MS, the training groups became important support groups and provided the space where the individual experience of change with its hopes and fears could be shared with others. This collective side, the sharing, is a crucial part of every learning

event. The psychological dimension of empowerment, which we mentioned at the beginning, means developing the necessary self-confidence.

Emerging new learning needs

U: At one time or another in the project, women had to interact with the male world, for example with local bureaucrats. Thus, new needs came up. The project followed these emerging demands, the need for training women to become trainers themselves, the need for producing gender-sensitive material, and for organization-building among hand-pump mechanics. In a way, the educational activities developed alongside the learning demands which emerged with the empowerment process.

M: Another aspect of MS is the transfer of skills from the "experts" to the lay people. Linked to it is the whole issue of communities' dependence on local authorities and government services for provision of basic needs.

"Expert" versus "lay" knowledge

U: The same issue is important in the **Palestinian** project. Here, women from rural communities are trained as health workers. As in the case of MS, the project in Palestine starts with women's traditional role, because they take care of family health. Only women can enter people's homes and discuss health issues with women. Through the training, the women acquire new roles and a new status, as they are becoming professional health workers responsible for the whole community, not only their own families.

R: The other interesting aspect of the Union's programme is that the training of women health workers is part of a larger strategy which aims at developing a system of preventive and curative health services run and controlled by the local communities. As part of this strategy, lay persons from the communities are becoming health experts. A crucial element of this strategy is resistance to the biomedical concept that sees illness as a physical event only. In terms of empowerment, the biosocial model of illness promoted by the Union is crucial because it sees health as a political, economic and social issue. So, in this case, official knowledge is contested.

Decentralization of knowledge

G: As a result of the occupation, for the Palestinians the public sector is suspicious, because it is controlled by the Israelis. Health services are far from sufficient and are entirely controlled by the Israelis. The only possibility was to develop health services in the control of the people.

A new approach: focus on generic competencies

R: The **Question de Compétences** material focuses on empowering unemployed women from the lower social strata who do not have a high level of formal education, but who have acquired valuable skills though voluntary and house work and who want to enter the job market.

U: What the QC approach underlines is the importance of gaining self-confidence as part of the process of empowerment. QC has developed an original method of developing self-esteem using a biographical approach which explicitly looks at those elements in women's lives which tend to be the least valued and recognized because they are not supported by formal certificates. While discovering their generic competencies, at the same time women learn a language which helps them to present their competencies convincingly to their partners and potential employers.

M: The people empowered by the QC material are not only the women participants, but also the women trainers and tool-makers. Being women themselves, they became involved in the process of discovering and valuing their strong generic competences.

R: In the **WGTA?** project, the empowered persons are men and women, living in couples. This project not only works with them at the personal level, but also at the collective level.

Focussing on the group process

U: The project achieves this through the pedagogical strategy used. The couple facilitators experiences are used as examples. A lot of games and exercises are used in order to initiate communication and reflection on topics which are not normally discussed in the couple. As in MS and QC, the group process is most important if individual change is to occur. Group power and group support help to make the transfer from reflection to action, since after each meeting the couples are supposed to accomplish different tasks or assignments given by the group. The difference from the other INNAE cases which look at gender issues is that WGTA? involves men and women.

G: In the case of the **environment project (FEEP)**, the group empowered is the fishing community, the fishermen and the coordinators. Women's participation was not considered at the beginning of the project.

R: Fishing was seen as a safe entry point to promote organization-building, to raise awareness within the community and to develop resource management skills. Organization-building is very important for the project. It has a very political orientation. The strength of the project in terms of empowerment is based on the approach which links the environment issue to questions of economic resources and political power.

From awareness raising to organization building and social mobilization

G: The project achieves its goals by working in two stages: The first part focuses on development of awareness and the second part on organization-building.

M: And, in the **GREAT** project, villagers become empowered through working with the graduates, although the project claims to facilitate development processes which are initiated and controlled by the communities. By comparison with former top-down strategies, this signifies a change towards more power on the side of the people. I see in the case study that the activities initiated together with the graduates all concern practical needs. The question for

me is how the empowerment process, which began with the graduates' work, can be continued in the longer term.

G: The way the project is conceived, I doubt whether it can help the people to develop internal structures which will make them more self-reliant. The graduates stay in the villages for three months only. Is that long enough to assist the villagers to develop structures which can last?

R: The graduates promote the building of committees among the villagers as a way of engaging in sustained development efforts. Herein lies the potential for a continued process. But we all know how difficult it is to make such committees last!

M: But in the case of GREAT, it is argued that since the students build their work on peoples' priorities, using local resources, such internal processes of empowerment can be initiated in even such a short time.

G: There is one important observation to be made, this is that even though most graduate students in the programme were women, gender issues do not seem to play a role in the activities which were developed. The question of women's empowerment in the family and the community seems to have been left out completely.

Empowerment, state policy and local development processes

U: Self-reliance is seen as the goal of this kind of development work promoted by the project. Is the aim of self-reliance for or against what we understand by empowerment? The problem with this philosophy for me is that self-reliance can be very close to self-responsibility, or, to making people responsible for what they manage to achieve or not. In terms of empowerment, as we have defined it, it neglects the wider context of power and the fact that empowering the oppressed or the deprived necessarily implies challenging the power of the rulers and the better off.

R: The GREAT project also makes the assumption that development for the people occurs in a harmonious process. At least, if we think of empowerment as a social and political issue, thus including strategic demands, such a process necessarily includes conflict and opposition. Other INNAE projects, for example MS, speak a lot about these conflicts.

3. Difficulties encountered by INNAE projects

R: I suggest that we know speak about the *results of the INNAE projects* in terms of empowerment and the *difficulties and limitations* which the projects encountered.

G: We have just discussed the limitations of GREAT's approach. There are economic changes through income generation, there is improvement in terms of basic services and provision of education, there is building of internal organizational structures and leadership, but we do not know whether such structures become permanent.

M: Another thing to mention is that the villagers learn to deal with local state officials. Which is, as we also see in MS, a crucial aspect of empowerment and a point that leads people to experience educational needs.

U: The other important result is related to a new developing consciousness among graduates, university teachers and the Ministries regarding development initiatives by the people.

How to make the process sustainable?

The Theatre-for-Development workshops, so far, have two major achievements: first, they reinforce some cultural traditions, and secondly, they promote public dialogue about community issues. There are also two constraints: first, the workshops remain at the counsciousness-raising level, and secondly, according to the author of the case study, the theatrical medium can also be used by political forces and development agencies for their own purposes. However, I think that the values developed by the theatre as an instrument cannot be entirely controlled. The process of gathering information, data analysis, performance and discussion after the play, provides a lot of opportunities for independent thinking.

M: But a gender perspective seems to be missing. At least, in the examples of theatre workshops presented in the case study, women participate in the performances, but gender relationships have not been problematized in the plays.

And what about gender?

R: QC is a good example of the limitations of women's projects in a male-dominated society. The biggest obstacle to achieving the aims of QC is the dominant male concept of work. Formal certificates and experience in paid work are generally more highly rewarded, and it is difficult to change employers' ideas about work.

U: On the other hand, as we said, QC seems to achieve a lot in terms of women's increased self-esteem. The material also helps the women to focus on their strengths and not on their weaknesses. And, women also gain new skills. Like MS, the Canadian experience is an example of combining awareness-raising or discovering one's own capacities with learning new skills.

Gaining self confidence alone is not enough: skills training

R: Performing the task of mechanics gives the women in India a sense of self-worth because theirs is work which is urgently needed by the community. Disregarding the income they can generate from this work, it improves their self-esteem and helps to make them more independent of their husbands, which gives them, for example, enough courage to stay away from home despite their husbands' opposition.

G: This relates to a point I want to discuss here. There are lots of problems emerging for women who participate in projects such as MS. When women enter new fields of activities, but are still expected to assume their traditional responsibilities, they end up with a double workload.

U: The difficulty could be described in the following way: change has taken place at the level of roles, but the conventional sexual division of labour is still valid. The cultural context which assigns women specific duties has not changed. This is reflected in MS. Those women who are very much accepted by the villagers for their work as hand-pump mechanics are still beaten by their husbands when they stay away from home. This is exactly the kind of problem about changed male and female roles which provided the rational for initiating the WGTA? project in Chile.

Women's projects: leaving aside the men?

G: I see a dilemma in those projects which aim at empowering women. They leave aside the men. But how can the women be fully liberated from gender stereotyping and subordination if the men's conventional attitudes to gender relationships are not changed? For me, it is very important to raise the awareness of both women and men on gender issues and also to generate support from the men.

R: WGTA? works with both members of the couple!

Responding to new community demands: niches for women?

U: Some of the women's projects in INNAE show that women can be accepted in new and unconventional roles although no support activities for men and by men were provided. In the Indian case, the women first met resistance from the male community, but then men learned to accept them because the women's work as hand-pump machanics was useful to the whole community. In a similar way, in the male-dominated villages of Palestine, the new community health workers in the beginning were looked at sceptically by the men. But the women found a niche, the need for locally accessible health services. They were accepted in their new roles because there was a great need for health services and they had occupied and filled that empty space. Women gradually entered other spheres, for example, the village health committees, which were largely male dominated.

Building up support structures

What is clearly coming out of the case studies is that women have built their own support systems. The training activities provided initial support. Throughout the learning process, women became more empowered and dared to take on new responsibilities and opportunities, and at the same time they discovered new educational needs. Then they started to create organizational structures.

M: I would say that the raising of gender awareness and sensitivity need not be a simultaneous process for both women and men. The first priority should be given to the women by creating spaces and opportunities where they can express themselves, recognize their competencies, enhance their potentials and claim back their voices.

Empowering men?

G: I still think that in working with gender issues in an educational project, we must not only facilitate the transformation of the way women understand their

role, but also initiate some work to facilitate changes in the men as well. This would help us to minimize resistance and misunderstandings. It is also important to provide the men with proper tools and to facilitate an open attitude which accepts that women have to struggle to liberate themselves from subordination and oppression.

R: The WGTA? project provides such a space where men and women together experience a process of change. In the early workshop sessions, the husbands speak for both of them by using the pronoun "we" (we think, we feel, ...). Gradually, around the fourth session, the women begin to express their own ideas. They begin to use "I" to express their own thoughts and feelings. It turned out that women became more empowered in this programme than men, since they gained the most in terms of their understanding of the issues involved in the male-female relationship.

M: But, as you said, the women seemed to gain more from the project that the men. They began to make choices and decisions to pursue their education, or to work outside their homes.

U: I see that we are touching on some very interesting points regarding the constraints and difficulties of the INNAE cases.

R: Let me start with WGTA? The women participants in this project are torn between doing conventional things which they usually do and trying new things which offer them new challenges. They are afraid of abandoning domestic chores because it is in doing these things that they find a sense of being needed, of being important, and being indispensable. Hence, they get power from fulfilling household tasks. They are not sure that their changed roles and changed situation will give them the same power as they had before.

U: Participation in the workshop has helped men and women to review their internalized assumptions on gender and to understand that they are culturally determined. As a result, both are now ready to share the other partner's responsibilities, e.g., men help women with household cores. But the basic patterns of gender images has not changed, since men still believe that women are responsible for the house and the family. In the same way, women still regard it as normal that men are responsible for providing the family income. Those who are in paid work would say that they are helping their husbands.

Changing personal identities and cultural representations is a long process

U: Other INNAE projects show the difficulties for the empowerment process which not only have to do with family structures and conventional images of men and women, but are linked to the broader social and political context.

M: The work of the Palestinian Union, for example, faces the problem that the community health workers are not very well accepted by the country`s medical professionals. It seems, though, that as the project develops, they are gaining recognition.

G: In the case of the environmental project in the Philippines, the results initially expected were that the waste in the coastal area would be cleaned up and that in consequence,

campaigns for new fishing methods would be developed. The crucial outcome of this project has been the creation of a movement or campaign and the initiation and promotion of organization-building among fisherfolk. Where local structures already existed, these were becoming more active in environmental protection.

But one of the problems of the environment project is that it is gender-blind. Women's participation is incidental. They only come to the workshops when their husbands cannot do so. The second important limitation is that the project has an impact at the local level, while the environmental problem is a macro issue. Education can be an important tool, but by itself it is not enough.

Gender blindness

R: What you are saying about gender blindness brings us back to the Kenyan project. One of the things which are not clear in the project is how the curriculum and the methodology take into account the fact that most of the illiterate population are women. Another aspect that demands attention is the statistic that 88% of the supervisors appointed are male, and only 11% women.

G: We could also ask about gender issues in GREAT. Have they played a role in the project? One thing we have to make clear in order to conclude our discussion is that the projects focus on different populations: some are explicitly adressed to women, others to communities, etc. We might like to ask whether it is appropriate or even implicit that within a project such as that in the Philippines, which is geared towards empowering local fisherfolk communities, the issue of women's position within the community should be adressed.

4. Summing up: the salient features of INNAE projects

M: If I look at the teaching strategies used by all the projects, it is important to see that these have been explicitly created in order to suit an empowering programme. But I think that whenever you use such non-formal or popular education strategies, which are supposed to be compatible with the ideals of empowerment, it is difficult to leave aside the gender issue. Even if not planned as such, it might very well come out as one of the issues being discussed throughout the learning process.

U: Among the most important features of the INNAE projects in relation to empowerment are certainly the teaching strategies which they have created. Another point I would like to stress is that the education programmes support the process of change. The sharing of experiences and the close involvement of the trainers are another aspect.

G: Another feature to emphasise is that former approaches, which were focused on conscientization alone, have been abandoned. Skills training has become a key component of the projects which we have discussed.

M: What you mean is that in the projects, emancipatory training or awareness-raising is combined with skills training. Let me just add one more thing to this summing up. Partnership between trainers and learners is one side, the other equally important aspect is partnerships with outside actors. The Indian and the Philippine project clearly show the role of outside intervention in initiating and sustaining an empowerment process.

IN THE GUISE OF A CONCLUSION: NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

Dipta Bhog and Uta Papen

1. The learner-teacher relationship

Contained within the reports of the case studies lies the practice that enabled the projects to bring learning about, to facilitate creative solutions and strategies for change. At the heart of this practice, influencing the nature of the intervention and the strategies developed, is the interaction between the "teacher" and the "learner". What are the dynamics between the two? Is it merely that the "teacher-learner" interaction is informed by a particular sensitivity, sense of responsibility and efficient strategies for learning, or are there other factors?

In the case studies, the case study writers reveal some elements of their practice. However, these are often expressed in general terms such as "creating self-esteem", "generating self-confidence", "initiating interlearning" and "bringing about change". As a second stage in our reflections, there was an attempt to look in greater depth at the processes underlying this practice. Two important pedagogical principles emerged from the second round of reflections.

1.1. The teacher is not the only source of knowledge

The emphasis in the majority of the projects is on generating interaction between all members of the group. Learning is not centred on or restricted to a particular group, but creates many learners and many teachers.

In the case of CAFAED, learning is not an individual activity that takes place between the teacher and the learner but occurs in small groups of learners. Here, learning difficulties and problems are handled with other learners present through a process of feedback which provides mutual support in learning.

In the WGTA? couples project, this is reflected to a greater and more visible extent in the case study authors' comment that:

"The most meaningful aspect to me in the project is that as the authors we do not own the programme, it can be disseminated with or without the organization, with or without the presence of the researcher and the NGO."

In the GREAT and the *Mahila Samakhya* (MS) projects too, there is an implicit understanding that the interveners and the graduates do not have all the answers, and that teaching and learning are a shared responsibility, the teachers being themselves open to learning and believing that the learners (women) have an understanding of what is possible within the reality of their lives. Therefore, it is not just a question of giving visibility and credibility to the knowledge of the learners but of learning from it. As a result, we see the development of a more horizontal process of interaction between the teacher and the learner. It is not a practice that depends primarily on the teacher.

1.2. Recognition that change involves stress, fear and the possibility of failure

> *"Change is a frightening process, holding within it the reality of resistance from the world outside, which has different practices and beliefs. It means swimming against the tide."* (Case study writer)

The majority of the projects take on the task of converting the learning situation into action by the participants. In *Question de Compétences* (QC), the women move towards joining the labour market; in GREAT, the graduates take on planning activities with the villagers; in the fisherfolk project, the attitude towards fishing practices undergoes a change; in CAFAED, the learners strive towards changing their world within and outside the home; in the couples project there is a change in the everyday acts of the two sexes; and in MS, the women themselves take on the challenge of learning new skills and challenging existing social structures. How do learning situations of critical reflection on one's life, beliefs, practices and values make the leap into becoming the basis for action? One possibility is the ability of the facilitators to raise questions that enable learners to explore contradictions and problems, which is different from the facilitators' providing the answers or telling the group what the problem is. In the various projects, the training becomes the forum where the participants have the time and space to explore these issues themselves.

However, what clearly emerges from the case studies is a recognition of the fact that change implies the human dimension of fear, failure and resistance. One way of dealing with this is to work with small groups, which provide mutual support in times of stress and change. The burden of responsibility is not borne by the intervener. In the generation of a dialogue on the common experiences of the group, there is an attempt to deal with individual resistance to change and to generate some "commonly" held understandings within the group. So we see a process that constantly shifts from the individual to the group and back to the individual. The individual questions his or her self, placing himself or herself within the community and then changes perspective to construct himself or herself within the group. Common lessons emerge from individual experiences, and these common lessons in turn influence the individual.

Self-esteem and self-confidence are generated by the group, through communication and by establishing that mistakes are part of the process. There are no pure and ideal standards that the group has to follow; rather, it works through a process of change. The case study writers from the projects see acceptance of failure, constraints and limitations as central to the process of creating trust and the confidence to act:

"Going through a learning process with strengths and constraints ...."; "...reversals and success are part of the learning process" (Case study writers).

This creates a positive environment for the learner, making room for criticism and reflection that builds on the project and makes it grounded within the learner's reality. This feature is also incorporated into the project, where trust forms the background for critical reflection on the practices, strategies and actions of the different actors in the projects. This is seen in the way in which the Chilean, Philippine, Palestinian, Colombian and Indian projects evolved over a period of time.

In more intimate, intensive interventions we also see that the facilitators attempt to: *"create an internal culture that is specific to the programme. Teachers and learners live out the way they relate their approaches to everyday life, preventing learning from being a divisive process. Learning does not take place in laboratory situations or in formal meetings and sessions but extends to what people do and how they behave with each other."* (Case study writer)

Another approach adopted by some projects such as AETTC and CAFAED is to provide learners with the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Therefore, the way in which these projects structure themselves is by moving away from formalized standards of how much the learner must learn within a given period of time and giving learners freedom of choice. This places respect for the adult at the centre of education (CAFAED). The adult is seen as the best judge of what skills to acquire within what time, and the teaching modules and courses are built on this principle.

2. Strategies for constructing knowledge

In all the projects, learning is firmly based on what people already know and have learnt before:

"the importance of lessons and competencies derived from experience and action"; "experiental learning that incorporates people's hopes, fears, practices and beliefs" (Case study writers).

This is the springboard for the creation of new knowledge, new identities and new possibilites within projects such as QC, WGTA?, the fisherfolk education programme in the Philippines, the women's project in India and the projects in Sri Lanka and Colombia.

2.1. Dialogue between existing and new systems of knowledge

The process of constructing new knowledge starts by reviewing prior experience. In other words, learning begins with reflecting on what one has been doing and is doing. In the projects, this reflection is initiated through discussion and exchange between the learners and/or between the teachers and learners.

It is important to make a distinction between these projects and those that give validity and recognition to learners' knowledge more from the point of view of using it as a means of introducing the learner to a more scientific, rational system of knowledge. The aim in this approach is to replace learners' knowledge by a different system of knowledge.

In the INNAE projects, learning takes place in a continuous dialogue between the existing and the new systems of knowledge and experience. Learning is no longer a linear process of moving from the known to the unknown, but goes more in circular movements. The learners switch back and forth between the old and the new, and are constantly reviewing both.

But learning from what one has been doing is not bound by experiences undergone before the project has begun. The learning process itself is a source of inspiration for the construction of new knowledge and new insights. In the "couples" project in Chile, after each session the participants are given tasks by the group which they have to complete before the next group

session. The experiences are then shared and discussed in the group. They become a source for further reflection and learning. Since the learning comes from first-hand experience and action, it is essential for the projects to help learners to develop the ability to draw lessons from experiences and actions. This aspect is most evident in the QC approach.

The fisherfolk environmental awareness seminars attempt to fuse people's cognition, actions and perceptions with crucial insights from the environmental sciences. The community health workers' training in Palestine incorporates indigenous medical concepts, social and economic aspects of health and health promotion. As the Palestinian case shows, breaking away from dependence on experts and the conventional assumption that it is the specialist who holds all the knowledge, is even possible in the highly professionalized field of medicine and health care.

In the WGTA? project in Chile, the couple facilitators play a crucial role in the learning process. Their experiences serve as examples and invite the participating couples to start reviewing their own situations. Through collective discussions among the women trainees in the MS project, individual experiences are brought together in order to build a common body of knowledge. This commonality of experience is used as a tool to link individual life histories to the broader cultural and political context. In both projects we see a crucial element of feminist practice being central to the methodology. Couple facilitators and the women who implement MS share and analyse their own experiences along with the learners. The issue of gender inequality not only affects the learners but also has an impact on the lives of the facilitators. This recognition provides another dimension to the commonality of experience of all those who participate in the process of critically reflecting on their life experiences.

2.2. Extending learning situations

Within some of the case studies, such as the GREAT and MS projects, we see an extension of what constitutes a learning situation. There is a mixture of formal and non-formal learning, in which meetings, training courses and learning centres combine with interactions in the village, among the participants, visits to other villages and to government offices. Meeting a local bureaucrat can become the basis for understanding the administrative system.

Linking reflection and action, theoretical and practical work, is similarily important in other INNAE projects. In the training of community health workers, theoretical instruction at the school is combined with practical work in the health centres. In the hand-pump mechanics' project, training in technical skills is but one part of the learning, the other equally important part being joint reflection on the personal changes and the difficulties the women experience.

In other projects we see the need to combine the introduction of a new understanding with a parallel building up of structures and competencies. In the fisherfolk project, without a transfer from mere cognitive instruction to the introduction of alternative fishing and resource management techniques, no real changes in the fisherfolk's situation can be achieved. This insight has led to the development of a training programme in resource management techniques in addition to the seminars on environmental awareness-building.

> *"Creating linkages between our different worlds: from the divided personality to the unified self."* (Case study writer)

The projects adopt a global approach to the individual, society and work, in which linkages are made between different dimensions of the individual's life. This is seen most vividly in the QC material. This looks at competencies which the women have already acquired and transfers them into other areas of their lives, breaking down the boundaries between the inner and the outer world.

CAFAED puts the emphasis less on imparting knowledge than on developing learners' learning skills. Besides, cognitive development is understood as but one aspect of people's learning, the development of self-confidence and social values being equally important. The module structure of the programme permits integration of learning competencies with values and attitude-building.

3. From awareness-raising to learning skills and acquiring new competencies

In the projects we see a dynamic emerging between awareness-raising, action and development of skills and competencies. Moving away from the dualistic pattern of awareness-building for protest and demand for change, projects are incorporating elements of skills training and learning of new technologies. A series of educational stages involving all these elements builds up a more positive programme of action.

The Philippine project began with awareness-building and advocacy and moved to the training of grassroots coastal environment managers. Building up skills in policy, advocacy, technological change, rehabilitation and protection, with a concern for alternative means of earning a livelihood and co-management strategies, forms part of their training. This is seen as important if there is to be an impact on the larger socio-political context of control over marine resources by the fisherfolk.

> *"Conflict is not the only basis for change. Constructive learning and activities are important phases. To create is also crucial to change."* (Case study writer)

In all these attempts at a change process which directly affects people's lives, a variety of educational methods is used, demanding creativity at all levels of learning. The case studies provide a range of examples of learning practices which are not conventionally applied in education programmes, including the use of metaphors and visual stimulation, which bring in the left sides of our brains that are so often neglected in traditional methods of instruction.

4. Developing partnerships

The ability to engage in collective learning with others, and the desire to extend this learning process to other groups and other contexts, lead to the creation of partnerships with different organizations, groups and institutions. In such a situation, a project seeks to remain close to its original approach, while negotiating over and adapting to different perspectives.

The need to link with and the ability to understand the "other" has been implemented most actively by the women's projects included in INNAE, through training and linking women from different contexts and background.

Recognizing differences between the actors who are part of the learning process at different levels in the project and within the organization or the institutions involved is essential if such partnerships are to be sustainable. Flexibility is a necessity for such programmes which, as in the Kenyan case, have constantly to review and adjust the programme according to all participants' changing needs and interests.

Creating new learner-teacher relationships and building partnerships with various actors from within and outside the project are some of the crucial innovative characteristics of the INNAE cases. Another element is the attempt being made in these experiences to enable flexibility in order to respond to new learning demands which emerge in the course of the projects' implementation.

List of Contributors

Ms Rachel Bélisle,Tools Director, c/o Institut Canadien d'Education des Adultes (ICÉA), 5225 rue Berri, Bureau 300, Montréal, Québec H2J 2S4/Canada

Ms Dipta Bhog, NIRANTAR, A Centre for Women and Education, B-64 Sarvoyada Enclave, Second Floor, New Delhi 110017/India

Ms Maria Auxiliadora Consuegra, Head of the Continuing Education Programme for Adults (CAFAM), Avenida 68 No 65-89, Santafé de Bogota/Colombia

Mr S.B. Ekanayake, Basic Education Adviser, UNESCO, P.O. Box 2034, Islamabad/Pakistan

Dr Ingrid Jung, Programme Officer, Basic Education Section, German Foundation for International Development (DSE), Hans-Böckler-Strasse 5, 53225 Bonn/Germany

Dr Jihad Abdel Hadi Mash'al, Vice President UPMRC; **Ms Rihab Sandoukah**, Deputy Director of the Community Health Workers School, Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), P.O. Box 51483, Jerusalem/Israel

Mr Khalfan Mazrui, Principal, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed School, P.O.Box 90149, Mombasa/Kenya

Mr Werner Mauch, Research Specialist; **Ms Uta Papen**, Assistant Research Specialist, UNESCO-Institute for Education, Feldbrunnenstrasse 58, 20148 Hamburg/Germany

Dr Josef Müller, Consultant, Rautenstrauchstrasse 6, 53757 St.Augustin/Germany

Dr Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh, Associate Professor, Director/Office of Academic Affairs, University of Buea, P.O. Box 63, Buea/Cameroon

Ms Catherine Odora, Consultant, c/o Royal Netherlands Embassy
25 Arcadia Street, P.O. Box 119, Pretoria 0001/South Africa

Ms B. Rosa Saavedra Diaz; **Dr Manuel Bastías Urra**, Centro de Investigación y Desarollo de la Educación (CIDE), Erasmo Escala No. 1825, Casilla 13608, Santiago/Chile

Ms M. Linnea Villarosa-Tanchuling, Consultant, Tambuyog Development Center , Room 108-A, Philippine Social Science Center (PSSC), Commonwealth Ave, Diliman Quezon City Philippines

Dr Myrian Zuñiga, Profesora titular, Instituto de Educación y Pedagogía, Universidad del Valle, Ciudad Universitaria (Meléndez), Apartado 25360, Cali/Colombia

All over the world, innovative educational practices are being introduced in order to respond better to learners' changing demands. The book highlights some instructive examples of such innovations in the field of organized adult learning. It documents a unique methodological experience. The issue-oriented approach to analyzing innovations was developed through a participatory process of common research and learning. The main argument put forward is that educational innovations involve a transformative goal both as far as the organization of learning itself and the learners' lives are concerned. Thus, innovation almost necessarily leads to conflict and meets resistance – from the learners as well as from their social environment. Successful innovation is characterized by the capacity to help learners deal with such conflicts without losing the transformative perspective.

Uta Papen is an anthropologist and historian and has done research on indigenous medical systems in West Africa. She is an assistant research specialist at the UNESCO Institute for Education where she works on health and environmental education for adults.
Werner Mauch graduated in business administration and holds an MA in adult education. He has worked on the epistemology of sexuality and AIDS with a special focus on biographical research. He is a research specialist at the UNESCO Institute for Education and coordinates several international studies on adult learning.